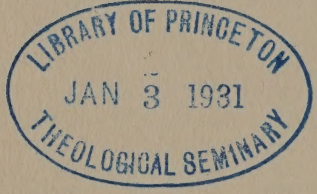
# Seven Great Bibles

ALFRED W. MARTIN

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# SEVEN GREAT BIBLES

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# SEVEN GREAT BIBLES

## THE SACRED SCRIPTURES

of

Hinduism, Buddhism, Zoroastrianism, Confucianism (Taoism), Mohammedanism, Judaism and Christianity

By

ALFRED W. MARTIN,

*A.M., S.T.B. (Harv.)*

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# PREFATORY NOTE

THE purpose of this book is to let the seven great oriental religions—Hinduism, Buddhism, Zoroastrianism, Confucianism (including Taoism), Mohammedanism, Judaism and Christianity—speak for themselves through their sacred scriptures. Literature there is, in abundance, *about* these religions, but, hitherto, so far as I know, the attempt has not been made to show what these religions stand for *in the language of their own fountain-sources of information.* Anthologies there are, in goodly number, consisting for the most part of brief quotations from these sacred books, topically or otherwise arranged, but, as yet, there has been no presentation of extended passages embodying the salient teachings of the religions and made intelligible to uninitiated readers by the aid of explanatory prefaces. It is hoped that in the publication of this book two main purposes will be served. First, cultivation of that modern virtue, appreciation—to the knowledge and practice of which the race has been slowly climbing through centuries. Appreciation is not a synonym for tolerance though many are of the opinion that tolerance represents the acme of spiritual attainment. A distinguished Unitarian divine once defined tolerance as "the loveliest flower on the rosebush of liberalism," but surely, that is a mistake, because

while tolerance, which is the *willing* consent to have others hold opinions different from one's own, is superior to forbearance, the *un*willing consent to have others hold opinions different from one's own, yet does tolerance always imply a measure of concession. We tolerate what we cannot help but would put out of the way if we could. Tolerance always has an air of patronizing condescension about it. He who tolerates affects a certain spiritual conceit which is irresistibly spurned by him who is tolerated. No, lovelier by far is the flower appreciation,—a compound of insight, justice and love. Appreciation is dissatisfied with tolerance, spurns forbearance, blushes at persecution. Toward every religious system appreciation takes the organic viewpoint. It conceives all religions as members of a family, each having some excellence peculiar to itself to be contributed toward the enrichment of all the rest and receiving in return the manifold contributions of all the others toward its own enhancement. Toward the Bibles of the great religions appreciation takes the eclectic attitude, asking of each: What have you to offer? What can we borrow from your moral and spiritual thesaurus to increase our own sources of inspiration? Toward the Founders of these religions appreciation takes a docile attitude, ready and willing to bow before every great religious teacher be he the Buddha, Zoroaster, Confucius, Mohammed, Moses, Jesus; not, indeed, that they all are to be equally evaluated, but each is to be appraised according to the truth he has to teach and the in-

spiration that can be derived from the story of his life. Appreciation looks upon all the religions of the world as comparable to the stops and pedals of a great organ, some emphasizing the essential notes, others the ornamental; none, of itself, yielding the full-orbed music, but the individual melodies blending to produce the great symphony of human aspiration and faith.

A second purpose in the preparation of this book is to help promote the ennobling religious aim of the World-Unity Foundation under whose auspices the present series of publications is issued. No one can read what these great religions have to teach without perceiving not only that on many points they are at one but also that in many particulars they differ. Too long has attention been confined to the resemblances in the teachings of the world's great religions. 'Tis time we took cognizance also of the differences. Is not the very life of a religion in those features which differentiate it from others? The life of Christianity, for example, is surely the belief in the Sonship of Jesus Christ. Eliminate that and the very essence of the Christian religion is forfeited, for without that doctrine Christianity would cease to be Christian. Far, then, from disregarding the differences in the teachings of the great religions they are to be frankly recognized, acknowledged, respected and this made the indispensable condition upon which the only unity in religion worth having is to be attained—*unity in diversity*. And to strive for the attainment of that ideal; to work for realiza-

tion of an organic fellowship of faiths that precludes all possibility of sectarian rivalry, jealousy and ruinous competition; to achieve the interlocking of differences, the mutual enhancement of diversities, *that* is one of the cardinal functions of the World-Unity Foundation.

# INTRODUCTION

## *Discovery of Sacred Books of the East*

It was the discovery of other Bibles than the Old and New Testaments that gave birth to the science of comparative religion. And such were its revelations as to generate a new ideal of religious fellowship, a new mental picture of what it is supremely desirable to have, viz. world-unity in religion, a unity in which all the historical religions are duly coördinated and at the same time subordinated to the higher whole of which each is a part. The story of these scriptures can be briefly told. It begins with the *Koran,* the Bible of Mohammedanism, discovered by a Spaniard. When in 711 the Moors crossed over from northern Africa into Spain they brought with them a book for which they made the astounding claim that if every extant copy were to be destroyed, no real loss would thereby be entailed, because an everlasting copy exists by Allah's throne and can be readily recommunicated to men by relays of angels. The book proved to be the sacred scripture of the Moslems and has long since been translated into the leading languages of Europe.

Next in chronological order came the discovery of the Confucian and pre-Confucian scriptures of China, by a group of Germans who, about the year

1350, left the fatherland for the Orient and eventually found themselves in a rich and densely populated country which they called "Cathay" but subsequently learned to designate "China." Here they came upon a literature rich in ethical content and stressing "business integrity" as a cardinal virtue of the "superior man." It proved to be *"the Four Books"* of the Confucian faith and the five *"Kings"* which antedated the sage and were edited by him. Together the nine works constitute the sacred scripture of Confucianism and they, like the Koran, have been translated into all the chief languages of Europe.

It was a Frenchman, Anquetil du Perron, who, while browsing in the Imperial library at Paris in 1784, discovered a collection of dust-covered parchment sheets—manuscripts written in the Sanskrit dialect (Pahlevi) and containing part of the Zoroastrian Bible, the *Avesta.* Eager to know more of this sacred literature, Anquetil journeyed to the presidency of Bombay in northwestern India where some ten thousand Zoroastrians dwell—descendants of the fugitives from Persia when, in 1648, Mohammedans overran the country and sought to compel the Parsees to become Moslems. During three years' residence in the Bombay colony, Anquetil acquired not only knowledge of the language of these scriptures but also one hundred and eighty additional sheets of manuscript which, together with the Paris find, constitute all we have of the sacred books of the Zoroastrians.

Next in the sequence of scripture-discoveries comes one made by the British who, toward the close of the eighteenth century, took possession of India as part of the great commercial enterprise of the "East India Company." That great business undertaking led to the discovery, in 1787, of the oldest portion of what is perhaps the oldest Bible in the world—the *Rig-Veda* of Hinduism, written in Sanskrit and consisting of prayer-hymns in praise of personified forces and phenomena of Nature. Subsequently the other three Vedas were discovered—the *Sama,* the *Yajur* and the *Atharva*—and still later the *Aranyakas* or Forest Meditations and the *Upanishads,* besides the two great epics of the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata,*—the whole constituting the greatest body of sacred literature identified with any religion.

Finally came the discovery of the three *Pitakas,* the Bible of Buddhism, written in the Sanskrit dialect, "Pali," containing the 186 sermon-dialogues of the founder, Gotama, together with the metaphysical substratum of the system and rules for the monastic order or clergy.

Such, in brief, is the story of the discovery of the ultimate sources of information concerning five of the seven great religions of the world, the other two being the scriptures of Judaism and Christianity, the Old and New Testaments.

Since the middle of the nineteenth century the study of comparative religion has brought to light a surprising and significant succession of similarities

in the teaching of these scriptures. Most noteworthy are the following:—

1. Precepts on the cardinal qualities of the moral life—justice, temperance, patience, purity, truthfulness, love, etc. These, far from being the peculiar property of any one religion, are inculcated in the Bible of every religion. Take, for example, the duty to be catholic, broadminded, willing and ready to acknowledge the worth of religions other than one's own. See how in the Scriptures of the seven living great religions this duty is revealed.

In the Hindu Bible we read: "Altar flowers are of many species, but all worship is one. Systems of faith differ, but God is One. The object of all religions is alike: all seek the object of their love, and all the world is love's dwelling place."

The corresponding passage from the Buddhist Bible reads: "The root of religion is to reverence one's own faith and never to revile the faith of others. My doctrine makes no distinction between high and low, rich and poor. It is like the sky; it has room for all and like water it washes all alike."

The equivalent of this in the Zoroastrian Bible is stated thus:— "Have the religions of mankind no common ground? Broad indeed is the carpet God has spread and many are the colors He has given it. Whatever road I take joins the highway that leads to Him."

The selfsame sentiment appears in the Confucian scripture: "Religions are many and different, but reason is one. The broadminded see the truth in

different religions; the narrowminded see only the differences."

In the Jewish scriptures it is written: "Wisdom in all ages entering into holy souls, maketh them friends of God and prophets." "Behold how good and pleasant a thing it is for brethren to dwell together in unity."

Finally in the Christian scriptures we find the words: "God hath made of one blood all the nations of the earth." "God is no respecter of persons but in every nation he that revereth Him and worketh righteousness is accepted of Him."

2. Spiritual sentiments such as reverence, awe, aspiration, worship, these too, far from being taught exclusively by any one system of faith, are found to be common to all. For illustration let us select the spiritual sentiment of trust, the trust that, in Felix Adler's phrase, "we are not dust merely that returns to dust"; that man's essential spiritual selfhood does not die with the dissolution of the body; that the stamp of eternality is upon every human soul.

In the Hindu Bible is the command: "Go give to the plants and to the waters thy body which belongs to them; but there is an immortal portion of thee, transport it to the world of the holy."

In the Zoroastrian Avesta are these sentences: "At the last day questions will be asked only as to what you have done, not from whom you are descended. I fear not death; I fear only not having lived well enough."

From the Pitakas of the Buddhists we have: "The soul is myself; the body is only my dwelling place."

The Confucian Bible declares: "Man never dies. It is because men see only their bodies that they hate death."

In the Mohammedan scripture we find this passage: "Mortals ask, 'What property has a man left behind him?' but angels ask, 'What good deeds has he sent on before him?' "

In the Jewish Apocrypha we read: "The memorial of virtue is immortal. When it is present men take example of it, and when it is gone they desire it."

Finally, the Christian scriptures contain the familiar words: "Though our outward man perish, yet is our inward man day by day renewed."

3. A passionate yearning for the perfect, for actualizing the ideal, this, too, is a characteristic of all varieties of religion. In none of the sacred scriptures is this spiritual passion wanting expression, whatever the form it takes on. Differences of climate, of environment, of education, of racial origin have produced varying expressions of it. Hence it happens that whether it be the Aztec, bowing before his crudely painted image; or the New Zealander squatting before his feathered God; or the Mohammedan, prostrate before his mosque; or the Christian, kneeling in prayer to his heavenly Father; or the cosmic Theist, communing with the "infinite and eternal Energy whence all things proceed"; or the founder of the Ethical Movement, meditating on the "Ethical

Manifold," conscious of himself as an "infinitesimal part of the infinite God, the spiritual universe"—in each case it is the yearning for a higher and purer type of personal life that has been expressed.

Listen to the Hindu chanting his prayer to Varuna, the god of Duty, and how readily you recall one of the penitential psalms of the Old Testament (CXXX), or perchance the "Litany" of the Episcopal Church, with its pleading refrain: "Have mercy, O Lord, upon us and incline our hearts to keep Thy law." This Hindu chant is part of the Rig-Veda and was sung by the Rishis (poet-priests) not less than forty centuries ago.

"O Varuna, Thou bright and strong God, have mercy.
Through want of strength have I gone astray, have mercy, Almighty, have mercy.
It was not my will that led me astray; it was wine, anger, dice, thoughtlessness; have mercy, Almighty One.
Not yet, O Varuna, cause me to enter the grave; have mercy, Almighty, have mercy.
Absolve us all from the sins of our fathers and from those we ourselves commit.
O Varuna, it was necessity, it was temptation—have mercy, Almighty, have mercy!"

4. The ethical content of the Old Testament Decalogue is missing in none of the other six Bibles. Nay more, the familiar Ten Commandments might well be supplemented by four others; one concerning cleanliness and another humaneness, both contributed by the Koran; a third, supplied by the Upani-

shads, enjoins intellectual integrity; the fourth, found in the Pitakas, relates to temperance, to the use of intoxicating drink.

5. The Golden Rule, far from being a "Christian" rule, antedates Jesus by centuries and was already very ancient in the time of Confucius. Each of the Bibles of the seven great religions contains a version of the Golden Rule, to wit:—

The Hindu: "The true rule is to guard and do by the things of others as you do by your own."

The Buddhist: "One should seek for others the happiness one desires for oneself."

The Zoroastrian: "Do as you would be done by."

The Confucian: "What you do not wish done to yourself, do not to others."

The Mohammedan: "Let none of you treat your brother in a way he himself would dislike to be treated."

The Jewish: "Whatsoever you do not wish your neighbor to do to you, do not unto him."

The Christian: "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so to them."

6. The fundamental religious issues—God, duty, immortality, in what religion are they not present? All the sacred scriptures of the world's great religions raise these root-questions of theism, moral obligation and final salvation, though the mode of dealing with them is in no two instances the same.

7. Each of these religions has a distinctive note of its own and it serves to differentiate each from all the rest. To borrow an illustration from Herder:

the great religions may be likened to the strings of a harp, each of which gives forth its own peculiar note.

In Hinduism it is the note of *spirit,* repudiating the notion of "dead," "inert," or "brute" matter, on the ground that the universe is thrilling, throbbing, pulsing with divine energy and divine meaning.

In Buddhism it is *renunciation,* the stripping from oneself of all earthly desire through a process of ethical self-discipline.

In Zoroastrianism it is *spiritual warfare,* culminating in the triumph of the "good principle," at war with the "evil principle" in the universe and calling for the coöperation of all human souls if world-redemption is to be achieved.

Confucianism contributes the note of *order,* bidding man reproduce in all his relations, the beautiful, calm, unbroken order he sees in the solar system.

Judaism sounds the note of *righteousness.* And how it resounds throughout the Old Testament, reaching its supreme expression in the Prophets!

In Mohammedanism we hear the note "islam" *submission;* the supreme need of every human soul being that of self-submission to the "omnipotent and merciful Allah," the heavenly Sultan, merciful because omnipotent.

Christianity completes the symphony with its note of *love;* not indeed that the doctrine of love is absent from the scriptures of the other religions; it is not; but the spiritual genius of Jesus and the particular circumstances under which his teaching came into

the world were such as to give special emphasis and fresh interpretation to the conception of love.

Such in brief, bare outline are the more important evidences of the oneness of religions as revealed in their sacred scriptures.

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## CHAPTER I

## THE BIBLE OF HINDUISM

### (a) *The Rig-Veda* (Lyrical Scriptures)

THE traditional triple division of the human family is into Aryan, Semitic and Turanian (so called after Tura, the mythical ancestor of the Turks). And the world's great religions may be classified according to their identification with one or another of these three divisions. Thus Hinduism, Buddhism, and Zoroastrianism are *Aryan* religions. Judaism, Christianity and Mohammedanism are *Semitic*. Confucianism is the outstanding religion of the *Turanian* group. Because of the genetic relation that obtains among the three *Aryan* religions, we get the best insight into the messages of their respective scriptures when we study them in chronological order. Buddhism, as we shall see, had its roots in Hinduism, while Zoroastrianism (though having, with Hinduism, a common ancestor in the primitive Aryan religion) took on organized form at a later date. Hence the true starting-point for a study of the scriptures of the *Aryan* religions will be the *Rig-Veda* of Hinduism, the oldest portion of a body of sacred writings which quantitatively exceed

that of any of the scriptures of the other great religions.

The Rig-Veda is a collection of metrical religious compositions most of which date from the twentieth century before our era, the time when the oldest known ancestors of present-day Hindus dwelt in the valley of the Indus and the great migration eastward to the Ganges Valley was not yet contemplated.

The name Veda derives from the Sanskrit "Vid," to know and means knowledge, or more particularly, religious knowledge. The word Rig signifies praise-hymn, *i.e.,* a hymn in praise of the personified forces and phenomena of nature. Hence the Rig-Veda connotes the collection of hymns of praise, expressing the religious knowledge that obtained in ancient India among the so-called Aryas. The Rig-Veda is therefore not a chronicle of rulers like I-II Kings, not like Leviticus, a collection of laws, nor like the Epistle to the Romans, an exposition of theological beliefs, but a series of prayer-hymns,—the spontaneous utterance of a simple religious faith, and still revered and used by Hindus today. This earliest part of the sacred scriptures of Hinduism is unique. None of the canonical scriptures of the other religions begin with prayer-hymns. From the very inception of their history the Hindus believed in the efficacy and necessity of prayer, and are distinguished today by the regularity and frequency of their practice of prayer. The Rig-Veda is a collection of 1028 hymns, of some 10,000 stanzas in all, the whole five times as long as the Hebrew Psalms. In the

estimation of orthodox Hindus, the Rig-Veda is regarded not as a human composition but rather as a divine revelation breathed forth from the mind of the Eternal into the souls of poet-priests, *Rishis,* as they were called These praise-hymns were transmitted orally for centuries by trained repeaters, before being committed to writing. And they were incidental to the sacrifice—the dominant feature of Vedic life. The chief thought and concern of these Aryas was the praise and conciliation of their gods at the sacrifice—a libation of the juice of the *Soma* plant and of *Ghee,* melted butter, poured into the sacrificial fire to the accompaniment of the hymns.

Open the Rig-Veda anywhere and you read the daily drama of sunrise and sunset, of dawn and twilight, of sunshine and rain, of wind and storm, of light and darkness. "What else," asked the late Max Müller (to whom we are chiefly indebted for what we know of the Veda) "was there to interest these Aryan folk but this very drama?" Yet it would be a sorry mistake to see in these descriptions merely an account of nature-processes. These Aryas addressed the sun, the wind, the rain, etc., with the pronoun "Thou." Yet they were not sun worshippers, not fire worshippers, not wind worshippers, but sun, fire, wind were symbols of a Power within them, ruling them and related in various ways to man. Every aspect of Nature gave to this primitive people cause for reflection and produced the belief that some power resided within or behind each force or phenomenon, so that no part of the universe was re-

garded from a physical or material standpoint alone, but always as embodying or expressing a power higher than man and capable of influencing human affairs. The Vedic poet rose in the early morning to a sacrificial day. The very first natural phenomenon he saw was the glorious maiden *Ushas,* the dawn, and she was spontaneously praised and pressed into the service of her worshippers.

### Prayer-Hymn To Ushas, The Dawn

We have crossed to the other side of darkness,
Gleaming Aurora hath prepared the way.
Delightful as the rhythm of poem, she smiles and shines.
To happiness her beauteous face arouses us.

This light hath come, of all the lights the fairest.
The brilliant brightness hath been born, far-shining,
Urged on to prompt the sun-god's shining power.
Night now hath yielded up her place to morning.

Bright bringer of delights, Dawn shines effulgent.
Wide open she hath thrown for us her portals.
Arousing all the world, she shows us riches.

'Tis Heaven's Daughter hath appeared before us,
The maiden dazzling in her brilliant garments.
Thou sovereign mistress of all earthly treasure,
Auspicious Dawn, flash thou to-day upon us!

Rig-Veda, Book I: 92, 113

When the Vedic Hindu said "Savitri, Thou Sun," or "Surya, Thou Sun," he was not thinking of the fiery ball that rose over the Himalayas and set behind the Indus; rather was he thinking of the power

within or behind the sun regarded as responsible for what the sun does as giver of heat; or of light as life-promoter or as life-preserver; so each of these functions he spontaneously personified and addressed by an appropriate name.

### Prayer-Hymn To Savitri

*(The Sun as Life-Promoter)*

God Savitri, approaching on the dark blue sky,
Sustaining mortals and immortals,
Comes on his golden chariot, beholding all the worlds.

O Fiery God, with thy keen eye,
Thou scannest, like God Varuna,
The doings of all busy men.
Thou stridest o'er the sky's broad space.
Thy rays do measure out our days;
Thine eye all living things surveys.

R.-V. I: 35; III: 62

### Prayer-Hymn To Surya

*(The Sun as Life-Preserver)*

By lustrous heralds led on high,
The fire-Sun ascends the sky;
His glory draweth every eye.

The stars which gleamed throughout the night,
Now scared, like thieves slink fast away,
Quenched by the splendor of thy ray.

Thy beams to men thy presence show;
Like blazing fires they seem to glow.

R.-V. I: 50

Indra, Agni, Dyaus, Varuna—what are all these names but attempts on the part of this ancient people to symbolize the infinite in the finite, the invisible in the visible, the supernatural in the natural? We say, "it thunders"; the Aryas said, "Indra thunders." We say, "it rains"; The Aryas said, "the Maruts, comrades of Indra, have come."

### Prayer-Hymn To Indra

*(Thunder)*

Let us sing glory to the far-famed Hero, who must be praised with fair hymns by the singer!

Unto the Great we bring great adoration,—a chant with praise to him exceeding mighty!

O Strong God, the riches which thy hands have holden from days of old, have not perished nor wasted.

O Indra, thou art splendid, wise, unbending! O Lord of power, strengthen us with thy might!

R.-V. I: 60, 62

### Hymn To Agni

*(Fire)*

Agni, accept this log of wood,
This service which I bring to thee,
Hear graciously these prayers and songs!

With this log let us honour thee,
Thou son of strength, the horse's friend,
And with this hymn, thou nobly born.

And let us servants with our songs
Serve thee, the lover of our songs,
Wealth-lover, giver of our wealth!

Be thou our mighty, generous lord,
Thou lord and giver of our wealth,
And drive all hatred far from us! R.-V. II: 6

### Prayer-Hymns
### to
### Dyaus-Pitar *(Heaven-Father)*
### and to
### Prithivi-Mater *(Earth-Mother)*

I praise with sacrifices mighty Heaven and Earth
At festivals,—the Wise, the Strengtheners of Law,
Who, having Gods for progeny, combined with Gods.
Through wonder-working wisdom bring forth choicest boons.
With invocations on the gracious Father's mind,
And on the Mother's great inherent power I muse.
Prolific Parents! They have made the world of life
And for their brood all round wide immortality.
R.-V. I: 159

Yea, Heaven and Earth, ye hold in your possession
Full many a treasure for the liberal giver.
Grant us that wealth which comes in free abundance!
Preserve us evermore, ye Gods, with blessings!
R.-V. VII: 53

What sin we have at any time committed
Against the Gods, our friend, our house's chieftain,
Thereof may this our hymn be expiation!
Protect us, Heaven and Earth, from fearful danger!
R.-V. I: 185

The most highly ethicized of the Vedic deities was Varuna (Ouranos, Heaven) for he was guardian not only of the Cosmos but also of the moral order, the keeper of Rta (righteousness), to whom the Aryas

prayed for release from the oppressing sense of guilt and for forgiveness of sins.

### Prayer-Hymn To Varuna *(as World-Guardian)*

Whoso stands, walks, or sneaks about,
And whoso goes slinking off, whoso runs to cover;
If two sit together and scheme—
Varuna is there as the third and knows it.

Whoso should flee beyond the heavens far away
Would yet not be free from King Varuna.
From the sky his spies come hither,
With a thousand eyes do they watch over the earth.

All this Varuna beholds:
What is between the two firmaments, what beyond.
Numbered of him are the winkings of men's eyes.
As a (winning) gamester puts down the dice,
Thus does he establish these (laws).

### Prayer-Hymn To Varuna

*(As guardian of the moral order)*

Whatever ordinance of Thine, O God,
O Varuna, as we are men,
We violate from day to day.

Give us not as a prey to death,
To be destroyed by Thee in wrath,
To Thy fierce anger when displeased!

Varuna hear this call of mine!
And be propitious this day!
Longing for help, I cried to Thee!

Thou, O wise God, art Lord of all!
Thou art the King of earth and heaven!
Hear, as Thou goest on Thy way! R.-V. I: 25

With mine own self I meditate this question:
When shall I have with Varuna communion?
What gift of mine will He enjoy unangered?
When shall I happy-hearted see His mercy?

O Varuna, what was my chief transgression,
That Thou wouldst slay a friend who sings Thy praises?
Tell me, God undeceived and sovereign, guiltless,
Would I appease Thee then with adoration?

Set us free from the misdeeds of our fathers.
From those that we ourselves have perpetrated;*
Like cattle-thief, O King, like calf rope-fastened,
So set Thou free Vasistha from the fetter.

'Twas not mine own will, Varuna, 'twas delusion.
Drink, anger, dice, or lack of thought, that caused it:
An older man has led astray a younger.
Not even sleep protects a man from evil.

O let me like a slave, when once made sinless,
Serve him the merciful, erewhile the angry.
The noble god has made the thoughtless thoughtful;
He speeds the wise to riches, he a wiser.

R.-V. III: 86

As from a bond release me from transgression.
May we swell, Varuna, Thy spring of order, (ethical)
May no thread break as I weave my devotion
Nor mass of work before the time be shattered.
Remove afar the wrongs which I have committed!
O King, may I not suffer through another's deed!

R.-V. II: 28

In what sense let me ask, have Christians outgrown the Theism of the Rig-Veda, the gospel of

* Note the distinction made at this early date (1500 B. C.) between sins for which we are personally responsible and those inherited from ancestors.

the divine in Nature and in Man? Only in this: They have dropped the letter "s." The Aryas recognized deities; the Christians know only Deity. The former spoke of gods; the latter speak of God. The ancient Hindus thought of the universe as split up into innumerable parts, each superintended by a particular deity; the modern Christian thinks of the universe as a unit, an organic whole, superintended by an infinite and eternal Power manifested in the creation. But despite these differences, Vedism has still its value for the modern world since it serves to bring home to us the helpful truth that there is no such thing as "dead" matter or "brute" matter or "inert" matter, but that wherever we turn we are face to face with what is ultra-material. Vedism reminds us that spirit is bound up with matter in all its forms, that the universe is throbbing, thrilling, pulsing, with divine energy and divine meaning.

Before leaving the Rig-Veda we must turn to one other hymn, one to which unusual interest attaches because it reveals a Vedic poet brushing aside all mythology, transcending the polytheism and even the monotheism of his contemporaries and reaching out to the monism of an ultimate causative principle, without personality. And this he designated not by a name, but by "That One." This is the so-called "creation-hymn" of which the most impressive stanzas are the following:

### The Creation-Hymn

Nor being was there nor non-being; there was no atmosphere and no sky beyond. What covered all, and where, by what protected? Was there a fathomless abyss of the waters?

Neither death was there nor immortality; there was not the sheen of night nor light of day. That One breathed, without breath, by inner power; than it truly nothing whatever else existed besides.

Darkness there was, hidden by darkness at the beginning; an unillumined ocean was this all. The living force which was enveloped in a shell, that one by the might of devotional fervor was born.

Desire arose in the beginning in That; it was the first seed of mind. The sages by devotion found the root of being in non-being, seeking it in (their) heart.

Who truly knoweth? Who can here proclaim it?
Whence hither born, whence cometh this creation?
On this side are the gods from its creating,
Who knoweth then from whence it came to being?

This creation—from whence it came to being,
Whether it made itself, or whether not—
He who is its overseer in highest heaven,
He surely knoweth—or perchance he knoweth not.

R.-V. X: 129

Note the excessive caution and the startling success with which the poet, after describing, in the first stanza, primordial chaos in terms of what was *not*, proceeds in the second stanza to state what positively *was*. "That One was and breathed without

breath," *i.e.,* not with physical or material breath—a marvellous attempt to describe a first cause without personality. Note also how the hymn ends with the note of profound skepticism, as though the problem faced were, after all, utterly insoluble.

(b) The Later Vedas (Sama, Yajur, Atharva)

Of the 1028 hymns constituting the Rig-Veda, nearly all were set to music in the *Sama-Veda,* or Veda of chants,—indicated by a musical notation. The third Veda is the *Yajur* or Veda of formulas,—a sacrificial liturgy and marking the earliest prose compositions of India. Here the all-important thing is the proper performance of the sacrifice, the deities being of little consequence in the estimation of the priests compared to the mechanism of the ceremonial. The mode of procedure is described by Professor Bloomfield as follows:

"A crowd of priests—seventeen is the largest number—conduct an interminable ceremonial full of symbolic meaning down to its smallest minutiae. The priests seat themselves on the sacrificial ground strewn with blades of sacred darbha-grass, and mark out the altars on which the sacred fires are built. They handle and arrange the utensils and sacrificial substances. And then they proceed to give to the gods of the sacrifice, each his proper oblation and his proper share. Even the least and most trivial act has its stanza or formula, and every utensil is blessed with its own particular blessing."

Typical of the thousands of formulas that consti-

tute the Yajur-Veda is the following as translated by Professor Bloomfield:—

> "May life prosper through the sacrifice! May life's breath prosper through the sacrifice! May the eye prosper through the sacrifice! May the back prosper through the sacrifice!" And finally—O deepest bathos!—"May the sacrifice prosper through the sacrifice!"

Latest of the four Vedas is the *Atharva* (circ. 1000 B.C.), the Veda of charms or incantations,—730 in all—and representing the religion of the poorer classes who could afford only the simplest rites, even as the other three Vedas represent the religion of the well-to-do, their ritual calling for expensive materials and the services of several priests who expected liberal fees. The charm-verses of the Atharva-Veda were recited for such purposes as the following: to ward off disease, to secure health and long life, to gain agricultural prosperity, to defeat enemies, to release the sinner's soul from the sense of guilt and from the fear of punishment. Here are four selections from this scripture, typical of the entire collection of stanzas:

### Charm Against Jaundice

Up to the sun shall go thy heart-ache and thy jaundice:
In the color of the red bull do we envelop thee!
We envelop thee in red tints, unto long life.
May this person go unscathed, and be free of yellow color!
Into the parrots, into the thrush do we put thy jaundice;
Into the yellow wagtail do we put thy yellowness.

Atharva-Veda, I: 22

### A Woman's Incantation Against Her Rival

I have taken unto myself her fortune and her glory, as a wreath off a tree. As a broad-based mountain may she sit a long time with her parents!

This woman shall be subjected to thee as thy bride, O King Yama (Pluto); till then let her be fixed to the house of her mother, or her brother, or her father!

This woman shall be the keeper of thy house, O King Yama; her do we deliver over to thee! May she long sit with her parents, until her hair drops from her head!

With the incantation of Asita, of Kacypapa, and of Gaya, do I cover up thy fortune, as women cover things within a chest. A.-V. I: 14

### A Charm To Gain Protection and Prosperity

1. For length of life, for mighty joy, uninjured, ever showing strength
   We wear Vishkandha's (rheumatics') antidote, the Amulet of Jangida (garlic).
2. Amulet of a thousand powers, Jangida save us, all around,
   From pain and from inflammation, from rheumatism, and tormenting pain.
3. This overcomes Vishkandha (the fiend), this chases the greedy fiends away!
   May this our panacea, may Jangida save us from distress.
4. With Jangida that brings delight, Amulet given by the Gods,
   We in the conflict overcome Vishkandha and all Rakshasas (nocturnal fiends). A.-V. II: 4

A Charm Against an Opponent in Debate

(Uttered by an intending disputant before entering the auditorium and addressed to a kind of clematis called Patha.)

1. Let not the enemy win the debate! Strong and predominant art thou.
   Refute mine adversary's speech. Render it dull and flat, O Plant.
2. The strong-winged bird (eagle) discovered thee, the boar unearthed thee with his snout.
   Refute mine adversary's speech. Render it dull and flat, O Plant.
3. O Rudra, Lord of Healing, skillful in thy work!
   Refute mine adversary's speech. Render it dull and flat, O Plant.
   Comfort us with thy power and might. Make me superior in debate. A.-V. II: 27

## (c) The Brahmanas (Ceremonial Scriptures)

When the Aryas, after their migration from the table lands of the Himalayas, had settled on the banks of the Indus, they knew nothing of an organized priesthood. Every man was his own priest. But when about 1000 B.C., the Aryas migrated eastward to the valley of the Ganges and conquered the aborigines, a priesthood was organized and with it came a new type of literature called *Brahmanas,* dating from 1000 to 600 B.C. Prose treatises they are, giving directions to the priests for the proper performance of the sacrifices and explaining their philosophical implications. As such, the ceremonial prose Brahmanas are to be contrasted with the lyrical

poems of the Rig-Veda and likened to the Talmud. For, just as the latter is an exposition of the old Testament Pentateuch from the rabbinical standpoint, so the Brahmanas constitute an expounding, from the priestly viewpoint of the four Vedas and the ceremonial rites connected with them. And just as the Talmud interrupts its hair-splitting, logic-chopping expositions of the ritual (Hallacha) by inserting rare flowers from the garden of legendary lore (Haggada), so the Brahmanas drew on a rich store of myths and legends which India had treasured from time immemorial and to which Hindu poets of a later day turned for material (*e.g.* Kalidasa). Concerned as they are for the most part, with the details of a sacrifical system unparalleled in the whole history of religions, the Brahmanas need not detain us. Let it be noted, however, in passing, that it is here we meet for the first time with the doctrines of Karma, transmigration and the hope of release from rebirth;—all three fundamental to the teaching of the later scriptures—the *Upanishads.*

In the longest of the Brahmanas we read:

> Whosoever goes to yonder world, not having escaped final death, him Agni causes to die again and again.
>
> SATAPATHA BRAHMANA, II: 3, 8-9

Professor Eggeling, of Edinburgh University, in the introduction to his translation of the Brahmanas says: "For wearisome prolixity of exposition, characterized by dogmatic assertion and a flimsy symbolization rather than by serious reasoning, these works are perhaps not equalled anywhere. They

represent the activity of a sacerdotal caste, which, by turning to account the religious instinct of a gifted and naturally devout race, had succeeded in transforming a primitive worship of the powers of nature into a highly artificial system of sacrificial ceremonies, and which was ever intent on deepening and extending its hold on the minds of the people by surrounding its own vocation with the halo of sanctity and divine inspiration."

### (d) The Aranyakas (Meditational Scriptures)

In the chronological succession of Hindu sacred scriptures we come next to the Aranyakas which appear at the end of the Brahmanas. These are forest-treatises, intended for recitation by those who went to the forest to live when the time for entrance on the third of the four stages of Hindu life had been reached (disciple, householder, forest-dweller, wandering ascetic).* The Aranyakas need not detain us any more than the Brahmanas because they are concerned chiefly with fantastic priestly philosophy. Yet must we take cognizance of the fact that as the arid waste of ritualism in the Brahmanas is relieved by the inclusion of the two ethical Epics, the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana,* so the dryness of these forest-treatises is relieved by emotional passages that stress the need of grasping the spiritual

* It is a mistake to see in the leading figures of the *Mahabharata* only typical specimens of ancient-hero-love. They all have distinct moral characterization. The epic as a whole is a drama of right in conflict with wrong and the individual stories centre around moral weaknesses and moral triumphs of men and women.

meaning of the sacrificial acts enjoined in the Brahmanas. Thus the Aranyakas are a transitional literature to the Upanishads in which ritualism is regarded much as it was by the Prophets of Israel. To these sacred scriptures, following the Aranyakas in the chronological order of scripture development, we now turn.

### (e) The Upanishads (philosophico-religious scriptures)

Next to the Vedas the most important of all the Hindu scriptures are the Upanishads. What the New Testament is to the Christian that are the Upanishads to every educated Hindu. The word means "seances" or "mystic teachings" and is applied to a collection of 108 philosophic prose-poems. All have been translated into English, but special value attaches to Professor R. E. Hume's translation of "The Thirteen Principal Upanishads." The Upanishads reveal the Indian mind seeking to know the meaning of the world of nature and the world of man, searching with an eagerness never surpassed and rarely equalled. Here we see the Indian mind climbing from peak to peak of mental attainment, leaving each in turn without reluctance or regret, because of the promise of a summit higher still. And if, at times, their thought declines to what is commonplace, this is more than atoned for by their passion for the absolute truth and their sincere consciousness of not having attained it.

Moreover, in the Upanishads we see these truth-

seekers carrying on their search in the sweetest spirit, exemplifying the precept in the epistle to the Ephesians with reference to "speaking the truth in love." Here in this noble literature, we find *philosophical* Hinduism even as in the Brahmanas we found *ceremonial* Hinduism and, in the Rig-Veda, *lyrical devotional* Hinduism.

The Upanishads are often called "the end of the Veda." This, in truth, they are as to the time of their composition and their place in the long line of *sruti,* or revealed texts. "End of the Veda" they also are in the higher sense that they present the finale of a development of religious and philosophical thought, the germ of which is in the Rig-Veda. No important form of modern Hindu thought but has its direct source in the Upanishads. The older of these antedate the teaching of Gautama, the Buddha, while the later ones presuppose Buddhism. The Upanishads contain no *system* of religious or philosophical thought, though they inspired each of the various forms of systematic Hindu philosophy. They are, in truth, compilations from different sources, recording the range of Hindu philosophic and religious thought between the eighth and sixth centuries before our era. What gives them their endearing and enduring quality is not the philosophical and religious results at which their authors arrived but rather is it the originality, the splendid pluck and sweetness of spirit which the work reveals. As Professor Bloomfield says: "We are

captivated by the quality of the endeavor more than by the quality of the thing accomplished"

Schopenhauer,—who was profoundly influenced by the monistic philosophy of the Upanishads and whose own philosophical system is largely based on ideas akin to those he found therein, said: (referring to Du Perron's Latin translation) "Next to the original it is the most rewardful reading possible in the world. It has been the solace of my life; it will be the solace of my death." And he adds the reason for his faith in the Upanishads, namely, that their fundamental doctrine is what has always called for "the unceasing meditation of the wise"; the doctrine of an ultimate unity of reality, the metaphysical Absolute, Brahma.

Here is set forth a monism, the most uncompromising and perfervid to be found anywhere. According to this doctrine, all plurality is only apparent because the entire universe of things and of human beings is the manifestation of an immanent divine Reality, the absolute One, Brahma. We have already met with this monism in its incipiency in the Rig-Veda, witness for example the famous Creation-Hymn (R.-V. X. 129)* It derives the universe not from any god or gods but, treating these as of secondary origin, finds the first principle in *Tad Ekam,* That One; neuter gender, impersonal, uncharacterizable, indescribable, yet other than It there was nothing at all. And this monistic concept of the great hymn is one with the Brahma of the Upanishads

* See p. 19.

only they carry the concept still further, holding not only that each individual human being is identical with this indwelling cosmic Soul, but also that the individual (atman) is the clue to the all-embracing World-Atman.

In the Rig-Veda, the term Brahma is used over two hundred times but never as signifying the Supreme Being, the ultimate Reality. This connotation of the term appears for the first time in the Upanishads and their central idea is (as was just said) that the whole world of things and of human beings is the manifestation of an immanent, divine, absolute, unitary Reality, called Brahma. In one of the early Upanishads we read:

"In the beginning, my dear, this world was just Being, one only without a second. To be sure, some people say, 'In the beginning this world was just Non-being, one only without a second; from that Non-being, Being was produced,' but verily, my dear, whence could this be? How out of Non-being could Being be produced? On the contrary, my dear, in the beginning this world was Being, one only without a second. It bethought itself, 'Would that I were many! Let me procreate myself!' It emitted heat. (Similarly, the heat procreated water and the water food.)"

CHANDOGYA U. VI: 2

"As are the spokes held together in the hub and felly of the wheel, just so in this Soul, all things, all worlds, all breathing things, all selves, are held together." (Brihad II: 515.)

But a final refinement of this idealistic conception

of reality was yet to be worked out. It grew out of the distinction made between the phenomenal and noumenal worlds, between "that which is sensuously perceived and that which can not be thus brought into consciousness, but can only be thought." Hence the manifold sense-world was abandoned as illusory (Maya) and its underlying basis seen to be the limitationless pure unity of being, the real Brahma.

"This Brahma is without an earlier and without a later,
Without an inside and without an outside,
For him east and the other directions are not,
Nor across, nor below, nor above . . .
He is unlimited." MAITRI U. VI: 17

"Brahma is He who, dwelling in all things, yet is other than all things, whom all things do not know, whose body all things are, who controls all things from within—He is your Soul, the Inner Controller, the Immortal."

"Brahma is He who, dwelling in the mind, yet is other than the mind, whom the mind does not know, whose body the mind is, who controls the mind from within."

"Brahma is the unseen Seer, the unheard Hearer, the unthought Thinker. Other than Brahma there is no seer. Other than Brahma there is no hearer. Other than Brahma there is no thinker. Brahma is your Soul." BRIHAD U. II: 1

"Not by speech, not by mind,
Not by sight can He be apprehended.
How can He be comprehended
Otherwise than by one's saying 'He is'?"
KATHA U. I: 13

This monism is charmingly expounded in the thirteenth section of the Chandogya Upanishad,—the famous parable of the salt.

1. "The master said to his pupil, 'Place this salt in the water. In the morning come to me.' When he came, the Master said to him, 'That salt you placed in the water last evening—please bring it hither.'
Then he grasped for it but did not find it, as it was completely dissolved.
2. 'Please take a sip of it from the top,' said he. 'How is it?' 'Salt.'
'Take a sip from the middle,' said he. 'How is it?' 'Salt.'
'Take a sip from the bottom,' said he. 'How is it?' 'Salt.'
'Set it aside. Then come back to me.'
He did so, saying, 'It is always the same.'
Then He said to him, 'Verily indeed, my dear, you do not perceive Being here. Verily indeed it *is* here.'
3. 'That which is the finest essence—this whole world has *that* as its soul. That is Reality. That is Atman (Soul). That art thou, my pupil.' "

Before leaving the Upanishads a word must be said on their ethics in the light of their monism.

Interspersed amid all the religio-philosophical speculation of the Upanishads we find many a moral maxim but no attempt to make the theoretical philosophy expounded a basis for morality. Indeed, the writers of the Upanishads seem to have regarded him who held the doctrine of the all-pervading Absolute, as thereby released from all sense of personal responsibility, because it is the deity who really acts

in and through him, thus exculpating him from whatever wrong he seemingly has done. Indeed, in these scriptures it is contended that knowledge of the Absolute as the only Reality relieves one of any concern regarding the right or wrong of anything one does. As illustrating this relation of morality to the monism of the Upanishads let the following quotations suffice.

"As water adheres not to the leaf of a lotus flower, so evil adheres not to him who knows" (that one's self is Brahma). SACRED BOOKS OF THE EAST, I: 67

"He who knows (the identity of the finite human with the Infinite Ultimate) is not stained with evil, even though he consorts with evil people. He becomes pure, clean, the possessor of a pure world." S. B. E. I: 84

"As a rush-reed laid on a fire would be burned up, even so are burned up all the evils of him who knows" (the mystery of the identity of the self with the World-Soul). S. B. E. I: 91

"One who knows the bliss of Brahma—he fears nothing. He does not distress himself with the thoughts, 'Why did I not do what is good? Why did I do what is bad?' He who knows, frees himself from these thoughts. This is the mystic doctrine (Upanishad)." The reason for this entire self-exculpation is that it is no longer "I" that act, but the Brahma who dwelleth in me —he doeth the works. S. B. E. XVI: 63

"As a snake is freed from its skin, so is he (who knows these truths) free from sin." This is a glad tiding of salvation according to philosophic Hinduism;

here is redemption, not merely from punishment for sin, but from the very responsibility for sin.

S. B. E. XVI: 282

"He who knows this (doctrine of the metaphysical unity of all things in Brahma)—although he commits very much evil, he consumes it all, and becomes clean and pure."

S. B. E. XVI: 199

Elsewhere we read:

"As a spider might come out with his thread, as small sparks come forth from the fire, even so from this Soul come forth all vital energies, all worlds, all beings."

BRIHAD U. II: 120

Such is the cardinal Hindu monistic concept—opaque in the Rig-Veda, translucent in the Brahmanas, transparent in the Upanishads. From this monism, it was but a step to the pantheistic idea of Brahma as literally everything. The Real of the real; not only the source of all things but the essence of all things.

"Brahma indeed, Brahma before,
Brahma behind, to right and to left,
Stretched forth from below and above;
Brahma indeed is the whole world, this widest extent."

MUNDAKA U. II: 2.11

He is Brahma, he is Siva, he is Indra,
He is the Imperishable, the supreme self-ruler;
Vishnu indeed is he, he is the breath of life,
He is the fire of death, he is the moon.

He is indeed everything that has come into being,
And what will come into being in eternity;
Knowing Him, one overcomes death;
There is no other path that leads to release.

He who sees himself in all beings
And all beings in himself,
He enters the supreme Brahma
By this means and no other.

KAIVALYA U. 8: 9-10

And since the highest object in the world of experience is the human spirit, the supreme Brahma must resemble spirit more than matter, and, correlated with man, the ur-grund, or Ultimate, is conceived as Infinite Soul (Atman) with which the finite soul (atman) is one.

"Both he who is here, in a person,
And he who is yonder in the sun,
He is one."

TAITTIRIYA U. II: 8

"He who is yonder, yonder person
I myself am he."

BRIHAD U. 515

"His is that shining form which gives heat in yonder sun and which is the brilliant light in a smokeless fire, as also the fire in the stomach which cooks food. For thus has it been said: 'He who is in the fire, and He who is here in the heart, and He who is yonder in the sun—He is one.'"

MAITRI UPANISHAD VI

The directly known self (atman) is real and must therefore be a part of the *fons et origo* of all-being, Brahma. So argued the ancient Vedantist in the

*Upanishads* and henceforth the terms Brahma and Atman were used interchangeably. In the words of Professor Hume, "The two great conceptions—*Brahma,* reached first realistically, the unitary cosmic ground, with outreachings toward a cosmo-thropic ground; and *Atman,* the inner being of the self and the non-self, the great world-spirit—were joined, the former taking over to itself the latter conception and the two being henceforth to a considerable degree synonymous." Here, in this union, the quest for the real, for the unity of the diversified world, reached its goal; the unity, searched for from the start of Hindu speculation, was found.

Underlying all Upanishad thought is the joint doctrine of Karma-transmigration. According to this doctrine, every living person has had a previous existence and will be reborn in some organic shape, whether as a plant, or as an animal, or as a human being, according as he has lived. In other words, everyone gets automatically the kind of transmigration which his deeds (Karma) have necessitated. For example, the man who has stolen grain becomes a rat; the woman who has stolen perfume becomes a muskrat; the priest who has stolen money intended for the ceremonial sacrifice to one of the gods will, in his next life, become a vulture, or a crow, because these birds make their living by stealing food. As it is written in the "Svetasvatara" Upanishad (V. 11-12):

"According unto his deeds (Karma) the embodied one successively

Assumes forms in various conditions.
Coarse and fine, many in number,
The embodied one chooses forms according to his own qualities.
Each subsequent cause of his union with them is seen to be
Because of the quality of his acts and of himself."

"Either as a worm, or as a moth, or as a fish, or as a bird, or as a lion, or as a wild boar, or as a snake, or as a tiger, or as a person or as some other in this or that condition, he is born again here according to his deeds (Karma)."

Elsewhere in the Upanishads this Karma-transmigration process is conceived in terms of caste distinctions, as in the following passage, in which the author foresees moral behavior causing transmigration into the priestly or the warrior or the merchant-farmer caste, if that behavior has been worthy, but into the lowest or servitor caste if unworthy, or even into the group of outcasts.

"Those who are of pleasant conduct here—the prospect is, indeed, that they will enter a pleasant womb, either the womb of a Brahman, or the womb of a Kshatriya, or the womb of a Vaisya. But those who are of stinking conduct here—the prospect is, indeed, that they will enter a stinking womb, either the womb of a dog, or the womb of a swine, or the womb of an outcast (Candala)."

"Like the waves of great rivers
There is no turning back of what has been previously done.

Like a lame man
Bound with the fetters made of the fruit of good and evil;
Like an actor in temporary dress;
Like a painted scene falsely delighting the mind,
(Is the condition of the soul).

MAITRA U., IV: 2

"According as one acts, according as one conducts himself, so does he become. The doer of good becomes good. The doer of evil becomes evil. One becomes virtuous by virtuous action, bad by bad action.

"But people say: 'A person is made (not of acts, but) of desires only.' (In reply to this I say:) As is his desire, such is his resolve; as is his resolve, such the action he performs; what action he performs, *that* he procures for himself."

BRIHAD, V: 4, 5

Vedism knew nothing of this doctrine. The religion of the Rig-Veda presented to its devotees the prospect of life in a solar paradise as the reward for good deeds and a corresponding hell for the wicked. How then did this doctrine of transmigration originate? The answer would seem to be that the Hindu mind,—subtle, naive, speculative,—could not rest at ease in the Vedic doctrine. And so there appeared one day, in the ninth or tenth century, a certain Hindu, who, nervous and dubious about the *permanence* of this life in heaven among the Vedic gods, asked:—What if the good deeds done were not numerous enough to guarantee *perpetual* life in paradise? In that case there would be death in heaven as there was on earth; and if a man can die

twice, why not many times? From such speculation it was but a step to the belief that the law of moral compensation operates not only in the strange, unknown, distant Heaven, but also here on the familiar earth,—death and rebirth occurring over and over again until sin and virtue have adequately and completely received their respective punishment and reward, each death followed by rebirth into a condition determined by the net result of conduct in all earlier lives.

Thus the notion of rebirth, once entertained, was duly developed into a clearly defined doctrine based on the law of cause and effect and called, in Sanskrit, "Karma." It has its Christian equivalent in the familiar apothegm of the Apostle Paul, "Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap." Emerson stated it in the terse phrase, "The dice of God are loaded." Karma means deed, or more specifically the *effect* of deed on the subsequent character of the doer. The thinking and the thought, the doing and the act, all pass away, but not without leaving enduring traces on the character. These effects are called *samskaras,* deed-structures and their preservation makes reincarnation possible. Actions, like seeds, bear fruit, some early, some late, in the course of man's successive rebirths and Karma is the mysterious law which binds each life to the one next preceding it.

We are what we are today, good or bad, or good and bad, because of good and bad deeds done in previous states of existence. This present life is only

a link in a chain of lives through which we have already passed. We do not remember them but they have left their indelible mark upon us. Having no recollection of any previous state no one has any knowledge of how his moral account stands, or as to what his next incarnation will be, but it is automatically determined by the operation of Karma.

The old Vedic religion, as revealed in the Rig-Veda, was essentially optimistic because it looked forward to endless happiness in the solar paradise; but its successor, Brahmanism, as revealed in the Upanishads, was essentially pessimistic because it looked forward to a practically endless succession of rebirths before the law of Karma had been fully worked out and reincarnation ceased. And this explains the fact that no sooner had the joint doctrine (Karma-transmigration) become established than believers began to cry out for a way of escape from successive and practically interminable rebirths, because the process had become to them a horrible nightmare and daymare, an unmitigated horror from which release must somehow be found. Strange that in our day so many people should be turning to reincarnation when these philosophically-minded Hindus had turned away from it with loathing and sought a way of escape from it. Indeed the final purpose of the Upanishads was to point the way of escape from the practically endless chain of existences in which death marks the passage from link to link. As in the scriptures of all the other religions, so here in the Upanishads the question is

raised "What shall I do to be saved?" And here, obviously, salvation means the cessation of rebirths, permanent escape from reincarnation and return of the soul (atman) to its source in the universal Soul (Atman). Very explicit is Upanishad teaching as to the utter insufficiency of sacrifices (the religion of the Brahmans) to attain the goal. Typical of the many passages touching this attitude are the following, reminding us of the first chapter of Isaiah and the sixth of Micah in the Old Testament:

"Verily, verily, they who worship, thinking sacrifices are
our work; they, indeed, return hither again."
"Unsafe boats are these sacrificial forms.
They who approve them go again to old age and death."
MUNDAKA U., I: 2, 7

Over against this negative teaching as to the way of escape from rebirths stand the positive prescriptions contained in two groups of selections from the Svetasvatara Upanishad. The one group (a) makes knowledge of Brahma as the ultimate Reality the condition of non-return to earth; the other (b) makes cessation of rebirths depend on *Yoga-practices*—repressing the senses, controlling the breath, and other austerities,—the word Yoga meaning a yoke and Yoga-practice, therefore a subjugating, subduing of the senses to the end that there may be a yoking of the individual atman with the World-Atman.

(A) KNOWLEDGE OF BRAHMA THE WAY TO SALVATION

"By knowing God (Brahma) one is released from all fetters.
Brahma-knowers become merged in Brahma
Intent thereon, liberated from rebirth."

SVET. U., I: 7, 8

"Those abiding in the midst of ignorance,
Self-wise, thinking themselves learned,
Hard-smitten, go around deluded,
Like blind men led by one himself blind."

MUNDAKA U., I: 2, 8

"He, who has not understanding,
Who is unmindful and ever impure,
Reaches not the goal,
But goes on to transmigration.
He, however, who has understanding,
Who is mindful and ever pure,
Reaches the goal,
From which he is born no more."

KATHA U., I: 1, 2

"What is perishable, is primary matter. What is immortal and imperishable, is the soul.
Over both the perishable and the soul the One God rules.
By meditation upon Him, by union with Him, and by entering into His Being
More and more, there is finally cessation from rebirth."

SVET. U., I: 7, 8, 10

They who seek the Soul (Atman) that verily is the immortal; that is the final goal; from that they do not return; that is the stopping (of rebirth).

"He who according to rule has learned the Veda

from the family of a teacher, in time left over from doing work for the teacher, he who in a home of his own continues Veda-study in a clean place and produces sons and pupils; he who has concentrated upon the Soul (Atman), he reaches the Brahma-world and does not return hither again; yea, he does not return hither again."

"They who proceed to Brahma return not to the human conditions here, yea, they return not."

CHANDOGYA U., IV: 15, 5

"When a seer sees the brilliant
Maker, Lord, Person, the Brahma-source,
Then, being a knower, shaking off good and evil,
Stainless, he attains supreme identity (with Him)."

"That subtle Soul (Atman) is to be known by thought
Wherein the senses five-foldedly have entered.
The whole of men's thinking is interwoven with the senses.
When that is purified, the Soul (Atman) shines forth."

MUNDAKA U., III: 1, 9

Thus absolute renunciation of the finite, futile, illusory world; the rejection of earthly desire; the realization of oneness with the Infinite One—this produces union with Brahma; it is the Upanishadic salvation, par excellence.

### (B) YOGA PRACTICES THE WAY OF SALVATION

"When cease the five
Sense-knowledges together with the mind
And the intellect stirs not—
That they say is the highest course."

"This they consider as Yoga,
The firm holding-back of the senses.
Then one becomes undistracted.
Yoga truly is the origin and the end."

"When are liberated all
The desires that lodge in one's heart
(To live in this world of suffering, sorrow, illusion)
(Maya)
Then a mortal becomes immortal.
Therein he reaches Brahma
When are cut all
The knots of the heart here on earth
Then a mortal becomes immortal.
—Thus far is the instruction."

KATHA U., VI: 10, 11, 14

Clearly then, according to the Upanishads, the ultimate purpose of each human soul (atman) is to attain realization of the truth that he is essentially identical with the World-Soul (Atman-Brahma) or as it is expressed in the famous phrase *tat twam asi,* "Thou art That." Given realization of this truth, rebirth ceases forever because this is a *saving* realization. It breaks into life, destroys the subsequent effect of deeds which would otherwise bear fruit in later lives and so puts an end to reincarnation. The atman returns to the Atman whence it came; the human soul unites with, but is not absorbed by, the World-Soul. For union is not to be confused with absorption; that would be to misconceive the Hindu idea. Absorption has physical associations and implications; moreover, it suggests loss of identity on the part of what has been absorbed. But for the

Hindu the real union is achieved not by the loss but by the illumination and expansion of consciousness. He holds that when the individual ego is united with the universal Ego it finds its real self and *establishes* its identity instead of losing it.

(f) The Laws of Manu (Legal-ethical Scriptures)

Thus far in our survey of the Hindu Bible we have included the lyrical, ceremonial and philosophical books. We come now to a body of legalistic literature dating from about 200 B.C and known as the *Laws of Manu,* oldest of the collection of law-books called *Dharma-shastras.* This *Manu,* or *Manava Dharma-shastra,* is the most important *legalistic* document in all Sanskrit literature and is symbolic of what might be called the religion of codification which arose within Hinduism at the close of the Upanishad era. It was dedicated to the task of clearly defining the duties devolving upon members of each of the four castes. In Volume XXV of the "Sacred Books of the East," we have a translation of the entire work. Here, for the first time in Hindu literature, it is argued that the priestly caste takes precedence over the other three. Here, too, for the first time, appears the word *jati,* meaning "birth," "family," "caste"; supplementing the word *varna* which, in the Brahmanas, meant "color," then "class" and finally "caste." Here, again, we are told of the divine creation of the four castes from the mouth, arms, thighs, and feet, respectively, of the

Primal Being (X. 45). The reason given for their creation is "to secure the world's prosperity" (I. 31), "to protect the universe" (I. 87). Here and in detail the duties of each of the four castes are enumerated; those of the Brahmans or priestly caste (I. 99. 100); of the military caste, from which the king was selected (VII. 1 foll.); of the merchant-farmer caste (I. 90 foll.); and of the *Sudra* or servitor caste (II. 39, IV. 79) created by the self-existent One to be slaves of the Brahmans.

Manu, or Manus, as he is called in Vedic mythology, was the "heros eponymos" of the human race, at once divine and human. As a divine being he was hailed at the Vedic sacrifices as "the lord of created beings," and later, in the Upanishads, he was identified with Brahma, the Supreme Soul. Again, as a human being, progenitor of the human family, he is called in the Rig-Veda "father Manu" and named with other sages of a remote antiquity, while one of the latest of the Upanishads reports that "in the morning they brought to Manu water for washing just as they are wont to bring water for washing the hands." As "the father of mankind," Manu was looked on as the founder of social and moral order, as a Rishi, or poet-priest, to whom sacred texts were revealed; as the inventor of sacrificial rites, as the author of legal maxims.

Not to follow the myth of Manu into its intricacies, let it suffice to note that to him is ascribed the authorship of the ethico-legal work that bears his name, though the higher criticism applied to the

document points, as in the case of the Upanishads, to a composite source.

The book divides itself into five easily differentiated sections dealing respectively with the laws relating to (a) the function of each of the four castes; (b) the supremacy of the priestly caste; (c) the perpetuation of the priestly caste; (d) the conduct of men and women in ordinary life; (e) the rules regulating a Hindu's holy life in each of its four stages—disciple, householder, hermit, wandering ascetic. To this fifth section the last half of the "Laws of Manu" is devoted. As we have already seen, Hindu life was interwoven with religious beliefs and practices and religious institutions controlled its development to an extent unparalleled elsewhere. In other words, Hindu life from birth to death and even after death was and is regarded as sacramental, at each stage governed by definitely prescribed laws. In the first stage, that of disciplehood, the law requires him "to study the Veda under a teacher and to live in obedience to his behest," and when at last he is a master of the Veda he is what is called twice-born and receives investiture with the sacred cord, the symbol of his preparedness to pass into the second stage of his sacramental life. With the following final admonition he passes from the first into the second:

"Tell the truth; do your duty, do not neglect study of the Veda. After having given to your teacher your gift of love, see to it that the thread of your race be not cut off! Do not neglect truth, duty, health, property, and the study of the Veda! Honor your

mother as a god! Honor your father as a god! Honor your teacher as a god! Honor your guest as a god! Live an irreproachable life; honor your superior; give alms in true spirit! When in doubt follow the judgment of Brahmans of tried authority."

As householder, the outstanding duties of the erstwhile disciple are worship and sacrifices to the gods and the begetting of sons to the end that the cult of the fathers may be carried on in unbroken line. The young Brahman thus disciplined and pledged to safe continuation of his race through pious sons is eventually prepared for entrance on the third stage of his sacramental life, that of forest-dweller, or hermit, maintaining only intermittent relationship with his family. Finally, all worldly interests are abandoned. Every fetter of passion and desire is broken. He subsists as he may, a wandering ascetic. He has but one concern, realization that he is the Brahma, and with that the world of illusion disappears. Salvation is attained.

Such, in brief, is the theory of religious law, and though practice often fell short of this mechanical and exacting plan, life was none the less looked upon as a religious pilgrimage with cessation of rebirth and union with Brahma as the ultimate goal.

Six of the twelve books composing the "Laws of Manu" set forth the rules governing each of these four stages in the life of the Brahmanical Hindu. The following extracts will indicate the general character of Manu's prescriptions and ordinances.

### *Discipleship*

"The teacher, the father, the mother, and an elder brother must not be treated with disrespect though one be grievously offended by them."

"That trouble and the pain which the parents undergo on the birth of their children can not be compensated even in a hundred years. Let therefore the student always do what is agreeable to these two and always what may please his teacher for when these three are pleased he obtains all the rewards which austerities yield."

### *Householder*

"In connecting himself with a wife, let the householder carefully avoid the following families be they ever so great or rich, namely, one who neglects the sacred rites; one in which no male children are born; one in which the Veda is not studied; one the members of which are subject to hemorrhoids, phthisis, epilepsy or leprosy. Let him not marry a maiden with reddish hair, nor one who is sickly, nor one who is garrulous, nor one named after a constellation, nor one bearing the name of a low caste. Let him wed a female free from bodily defects and who has an agreeable name. Let him, untired, perform daily the rites prescribed for him in the Veda. Whether he be rich or even in distress, let him not seek wealth by forbidden occupations. Let him not out of desire for enjoyment attach himself to any sensual pleasures. Let him avoid all means of ac-

quiring wealth which impede the study of the Veda. Let him bring his dress, speech and thoughts into conformity with his age, occupation, learning and race."

*Forest-hermit*

"When a householder sees his skin wrinkled and his hair white and the sons of his sons, then he may resort to the forest and reside there, duly controlling his senses."

*The Wandering Ascetic*

"Having studied the Vedas in accordance with the rule, having begat sons according to the sacred law, and having offered sacrifices according to his ability, he may direct his mind to the attainment of final liberation.

"Let him always wander alone, fully understanding that the solitary man who neither forsakes nor is forsaken gains his end.

"He shall neither possess a fire nor a dwelling, he may go to a village for his food, he shall be indifferent to everything material, but firm of purpose, meditating and concentrating his mind on Brahma.

"Potsherd instead of an alms-bowl, the roots of trees for a dwelling, cores, worn-out garments, life in solitude, are the marks of one who has attained liberation.

"Let him not desire to die; let him not desire to live; let him wait for his appointed time as a servant waits for the payment of his wages."

Turning from these six books of the Laws of Manu to the remaining six, we find certain practices forbidden which in the Rig-Veda were permitted. For instance the drinking of intoxicants is here set down as "a mortal sin" whereas in the Rig-Veda soma-juice was freely imbibed by all the gods and by humans as well. (R.-V. X. 167.) Similarly gambling, though condemned in the Rig-Veda, is here strictly forbidden. Among the duties of a king is punishment of gamblers and those who bet.

"Gambling and betting let the king exclude from his realm; those two vices cause the distraction of the kingdom. Gambling and betting amount to open theft. The king shall always exert himself in suppressing both of them."

"Let the king corporally punish all those who either gamble or bet or afford an opportunity for them."

"Gamblers, dancers and singers, cruel men, men belonging to a heretical sect, those following forbidden occupations, and sellers of spirituous liquor, let the king instantly banish from his town."

According to the Laws of Manu, a unique value attaches to recitation of certain passages from the Rig-Veda as a means of self-purifying from one or another form of evil (R.-V. I. 97, 1-8; VII. 80, 1-3; X. 185, 1-3). According to these laws muttering for three days the first four verses of the fifty-eighth hymn in the tenth book of the Rig-Veda "purifies one who has accepted unacceptable presents, also one who has eaten forbidden food" (Carnivora).

Again, recitation of other verses from the same book of the Rig-Veda "helps free the violator of a Guru's (teacher's) bed."

Interspersed amid all the rules and regulations comprising the twelve books, we meet with genuine ethical maxims of a very high order, such as the following:

"A wise man should strive to restrain his passions which run wild among alluring sensual objects like 'a charioteer's horses.' "

"Neither study of the Vedas nor sacrifices nor austerities can ever procure the attainment of reward to a man whose heart is contaminated by sensuality."

"He forsooth whose speech and thoughts are pure and ever perfectly guarded gains the whole reward which is conferred by the Vedanta."

"He who possesses humility will receive learning even from a man of lower caste."

"Coveting the property of others, thinking in one's heart of thoughts undesirable, and adherence to false doctrines are the three kinds of sinful *mental* action."

"Abusing others, speaking untruths, detracting from the merits of others, and talking idly are the four kinds of evil *verbal* action."

"Taking what has not been given, injuring creatures without the sanction of the law, holding criminal intercourse with another man's wife are declared to be the three kinds of wicked *bodily* action."

## (g) *The Bhagavad-Gita* (Mystical Scriptures)

Come we now to a seventh of the types of literature that constitute the Hindu Bible. We find it embodied in a work more dearly beloved by modern Hindus and more influential upon their life than any other—the Bhagavad-Gita. So ennobling are its dominant ideas and so beautiful is the form in which they have been expressed that no other Indian religious work holds a place by its side unless it be the Upanishads. "The pearl of great price in the ocean of Brahmanical teaching"; "The supreme ethical and religious product of post-Buddhistic thought"; "The song celestial"—such are some of the phrases in which enthusiastic admirers have described the Bhagavad-Gita. William von Humboldt, the distinguished philologist, once remarked "I thank God I have lived long enough to meet with this poem, the most beautiful and the only philosophical poem in the literature of the world."

If the greatness of a book be measured by its influence over human lives then is the Gita a great book. For two thousand years it has swayed with ever-growing power the mind and heart of Hindu India. Millions have heard it, read it, taught it, found in it a range of hope, comfort, inspiration, telling, as it does, of the consecration of life to a wholly unselfish purpose and of an Infinite Love that forever and everywhere pours forth its illimitable grace upon all who seek it.

This widespread appeal of the poem is accounted for, in part at least, by the very variety of ideas it contains even as is the case with the Christian Bible. As in the New Testament so in the Gita every kind of religious opinion has been given expression. Here the Vedantist finds his Brahma-Atman; the Sankhya philosopher, his "flux" theory; the Theist, his personal God; the Pantheist, his All-Existent-One. By whatever way a man thinks salvation is to be had, the Gita gives it endorsement. In other words, the strength of the Bhagavad-Gita is its adaptability to meet every sort of spiritual need. It has an argument in support of every ancient Hindu doctrine. As Dorothea Stephen in her excellent monograph, "Studies in Early Indian Thought," says:

"If the necessity for action is to be urged, we have the following verse:

'Do thou always perform action
For action is better than inaction;
Without action even bodily life can not be secured.'"
(III. 8.)

Or if we are to understand the essential unreality of the self, we read, "When it is deceived by egoism, the self thinks 'It is I who act.'" (III. 27.)

If ordinary morality is to be practised, there is the whole of the sixteenth discourse with its continuation in the seventeenth and eighteenth discourses. If it be a plain rule of life that is wanted, then the whole book is an exhortation to follow the rule of caste. If

convention is to be put aside and search made for the one ultimate reality, we have only to realize that the book itself is a concession made to the partly-enlightened and that there is a yet higher way possible where its standards do not apply. If the seeker demands a personal God, we meet with the assertion again and again that such a being exists and that he manifested himself as Krishna, that he knows and watches the lives of all men, is their judge, their saviour, and is sometimes even said to love them.

If, on the other hand, anyone rebels against the limitations incident to such a conception, he can take refuge in some remoter existence of which nothing can be said except "that it is and that it is unchangeable, self-existent, eternal, infinite."

The authorship of the poem is unknown, but apparently it is of composite origin. The higher criticism is still at work on the problem of sources and results to date point to the presence of four or five hands in the production of the work. Like the Pentateuch, or the Book of Isaiah, the Bhagavad-Gita would seem to be the work of many minds and many centuries. A goodly number of additions and interpolations have been incorporated with the original. Indeed the poem might well be published after the manner of the "Polychrome" Bible, with the original text in black type and the supplemental parts in as many other type-colors as there are authors.

To unprepared readers who, hearing of its fame, take up the poem to find the secret of its power, it

proves as difficult and forbidding as the Koran. "Confused, repetitious, self-contradictory; a jumble of illogical subtleties and pedantry; a complex of conflicting ideas, standing in unmediated juxtaposition"; such are some of the terms in which the unprepared have described it. The Bhagavad-Gita, though constituting the sixth book of the great epic, the "Mahabharata," is yet a story by itself, complete in itself, and it exists in more than one hundred editions. Many of them are published in India for free distribution by organizations similar to our American Bible Society, which annually distributes thousands of copies of the New Testament, free of charge.

The poem may be described as the Bible of Vishnuism or Krishnaism, the best known of the many sects of modern Hinduism, claiming one hundred and fifty million adherents and differentiated from other religious societies chiefly by two beliefs. The first of these is that "the creator and preserver of all mankind" is Vishnu. He was originally one of the gods of the Vedic Pantheon but he has here been raised to isolated supremacy. No longer is he a personified nature-force as in the Rig-Veda; nor an impersonal metaphysical abstraction, as in the *Upanishads,* but an anthropomorphic deity.

The other distinctive feature of Vishnuism is the belief that this god has again and again been incarnated, and once, in the year 300 B.C., in the person of Krishna "to quicken flagging devotion to righteousness." Who was this Krishna in honor of whom the poem is entitled "The Song of the Blessed One"?

We meet him first in the Mahabharata where he functions as champion of the Pandavas in their feud with the Kurus, their cousins. In the sixth book (The Bhagavad-Gita) of this great war epic, Krishna is seen on the battlefield where the two armies are arrayed for fratricidal combat. Here Krishna has assumed the guise of charioteer for Arjuna, greatest of the princes of the Pandavas, a sort of Sir Galahad, —"sans peur et sans reproche." A long dialogue between Krishna and Arjuna, dealing with duty, deity and destiny constitutes the greater part of the poem.

Besides Krishna and Arjuna, two other persons are presented: a blind old king, Dritarashtra, brother of Pandu, and Sanjaya, a clairvoyant who acquaints the sightless king with the progress of the battle, being enabled with his inner or spiritual eye to see all that transpires and is hidden from the king who sits with him in his palace, eager to know how it fares with his sons and their cousins. Sanjaya tells Dritarashtra that the five brothers, sons of Pandu, are under the leadership of Arjuna who is charioteer for Vishnu-Krishna. As the chariot starts into action, Arjuna suddenly says to his god-charioteer:

"O Mandava (title of Krishna) I pray you to stop the chariot
Before the contending armies.
I do not wish to damn my soul
By killing anyone in battle."

Arjuna was a pacifist and Krishna instructs him

in the ethics of war, and more especially with reference to the following three considerations:

(a) Arjuna was born into the warrior caste and therefore has no alternative but to fight, for duty according to the code of that time and place was determined by the caste into which one was born. "Valor, heroic temper, steadfastness in strife, these are the warriors' proper works. Only as he devotes himself to his proper work does he attain salvation. Bound by thine own nature-born work, O son of Kunti, that which from confusion of thought thou seekest *not* to do, thou perforce *shalt* do."

(b) 'Tis a just war, inasmuch as the very existence of his clan is at stake, hence it is a defensive, not an aggressive, war. Moreover, every form of conciliation has been attempted in vain so that no alternative remains for Arjuna but to do battle valiantly. Says Krishna:

"To a knight there is nothing more blessed than a lawful fight.
Happy those knights, O son of Kunti, who find such a strife
Coming to them unsought as an open door to paradise."

(c) The essential self-hood of Krishna cannot be slain or slay, for there is a fundamental distinction between the self and the not-self, or between the material, tangible, visible self and the immaterial, intangible, invisible self. Therefore, let Arjuna dispel his doubts as to the propriety of killing relatives and friends. Let him manfully enter the fight and

do the duty which the All-Existent-One has laid upon him by creating him a warrior. Again says Krishna:

"Remember that these finite bodies of ours belong to an indestructible spirit.
They who think it can kill, and they who think it can be killed, are both wrong.
Changeless, eternal, it is not slain when the body is slain.
Weapons cannot cleave, nor fire burn it.
There is none who can make to perish this changeless being.
Knowing this, O son of Pritha, thou shouldst not hesitate, nor grieve."

Once more, in the second chapter, Krishna subdues the scruples of Arjuna over killing his enemies by the following Upanishadic utterance:

"If the slayer think to slay,
If the slain himself slain,
Both these understand not.
This one slays not nor is slain." (Katha II. 19.)

Here we are irresistibly reminded of Emerson's poem "Brahma" in which he contemplates the fascinating thought that prevades the Gita:

"If the red slayer think he slays,
Or the slain think he is slain,
They know not well the subtle ways
I keep, and pass, and turn again.

"Far or forgot to me is near;
Shadow and sunlight are the same;
The vanished gods to me appear;
And one to me are shame and fame."

Thus the immediate purpose of the Gita was to extol the duties of caste above all other obligations including the ties of friendship and affection, and at the same time to show that the practice of these duties is compatible with all the self-mortification and other austerities enjoined by the Yoga philosophy, as well as with the deepest devotion to the Supreme Being of whom Krishna is the incarnation. The purpose of the Gita, in other words, was the removal of obstacles that blind one to a sense of his duty by uprooting the seeds of ignorance and planting the ever-green palm of knowledge, knowledge of caste and of duty and of one's essential self-hood.

And when Krishna has ended his appeal and pronounced his final benediction on those who are dear to God, Arjuna rises, rejoicing; for his hesitation has been banished, his despondency vanquished, he is eager to engage in the fight that will bring him still nearer to his lord and to salvation. Arjuna says: "My delusion is destroyed and I have regained my memory, through thy grace, O changeless One, I stand firm with doubts dispelled. I will do thy word." (XVIII. 73.)

As the direct aim of the Gita was to glorify the duties of caste, so the indirect aim was to set forth a new way of salvation, one more easily understood and more adaptable than either the current *Yñana-Yoga* (Way of Knowledge) or *Karma-Yoga* (Way of Works). Krishna reviews them both in the course of his conversation with Arjuna.* "In this world,"

* The quotations are from the translations of the Bhagavad-Gita by Swami Paramananda.

says Krishna, "Twofold is the path already described by Me. The Way of Wisdom is for the meditative and the Way of Works is for the active. (III. 3.) A Yogi (one who is striving for final union with God through the practice of concentration and meditation) should constantly practice concentration of the heart, remaining in seclusion, subduing his body and mind and being free from longing and the sense of ownership.

"In a cleanly spot, having established his seat firmly, with a cloth and Kusha grass (a fine and fragrant grass used in Hindu ceremonies and said to have a purifying influence) placed one on the other, let him hold his body, head and neck erect and motionless, fixing the gaze on the top of his nose, not looking around.

"Let him sit steadfastly absorbed in thoughts of Me, regarding Me as his supreme goal. In that state transcending the senses, the Yogi feels that infinite bliss which is perceived by the purified understanding; knowing that being established therein, he never falls back from his real state of self-knowledge." (VI. 10 foll.) Thus one of the two methods of attaining salvation is the Yñana-Yoga or mental concentration practice; grasping the difference between soul and matter; by sheer intellectual effort attaining salvation—final release from rebirth and union with Brahma.

The other way of salvation, Karma-Yoga, is touched upon by Krishna in the following passages:

"O Arjuna, he who controlling the senses by the mind follows the path of action, he is esteemed.

"Do thou perform right and obligatory actions for action is superior to inaction.

"Perform thy duties (the work that is to be done) unceasingly for through the performance of action man attains the highest. (III. 7. 19.) Him the sages call wisest whose undertakings are devoid of desire for results, whose actions are burned by the fire of wisdom." (III. 19.)

But exalted above both these methods of knowledge and of works, of Yñana-Yoga and Karma-Yoga, is Bakhti,—devotion to Vishnu-Krishna, trustful love of the God Vishnu as incarnated in Krishna; for Vishnu made Himself man to save the world. The poem, as a whole, might be construed as an anthem in praise of Bakhti—simple trustful love of the immanent God who is also a personal, tender, lover of mankind, who made Himself man to preach the Gospel of salvation through devotion and who brings His devotees salvation through their fervent passionate love of Him.

"Those who worship Me with devotion,
They are in Me and I am in them. (Compare John XV. 5, 7.)
Even if the most wicked worships Me with undivided devotion,
He shall be regarded as good for he is *rightly* resolved.
Soon he becomes a righteous soul and attains to eternal peace.
Know, O Son of Kunti, that My devotee never perishes.

Even those who are of impure birth—women, Vaishyas (merchant-class), and Sudras (servant-class)—
Even they, by taking refuge in Me, attain to the supreme goal." (LX. 29-32.)

"I save those who set their hearts on Me.
Through My grace, they are saved.
They that love Me are in Me and I in them.
I am the father, the mother, the way of salvation, the only Lord and refuge.
Even they who worship other gods with faith and love
Are really worshipping Me alone." (XII. 11.)

"That worshipper of mine who cherishes no hate against any being but is full only of friendliness and compassion, who is free from self-seeking and from the illusion of self, who is patient and content, self-controlled and resolute of heart and mind, he is dear to Me. He before whom no one is disquieted and who is disquieted before no one, he also is dear to Me. He who is unconcerned about the things of this world, who is pure, impartial, untroubled, doing no thing from self-interest, he is dear to Me. The man whose every act is void of self the enlightened call a learned man; free from concern over the fruit of his works, everlastingly contented, unconfined, he gets no defilement and becomes not fettered; free from thought of an *I*, without thought of a *mine* and at peace, he becomes fit for Brahmahood." (XII. 113 foll.)

The authors of this Bible, it would seem, hold that no two men can find God in the same way. It is the same God they both find but the statements of their

vision are different even as are any two descriptions of one and the same sunset. To put the matter in common parlance: as a man takes his own particular shape and size in shoes, so must his soul choose its own way of salvation; eventually all the ways lead to the same God. Whether a man choose the way of wisdom, or of action, or of devotion, or of all three, at the end, what he experiences is the one inclusive God.

But special value attached to the way of Bakhti because it was one which the masses could comprehend and by which they could directly find release from rebirth. Moreover, salvation was hereby offered freely to the worst of sinners, to women, as in the plea, "Come, worship! Perish not!" (IX. 33-34); offered freely to Sudras, the lowest caste,—final release from rebirth instead of merely the hope of being reborn into a higher caste, as was taught in the Laws of Manu. (IX. 334.) A far cry, this, from the severely intellectual ideals of Brahmanism as expressed in the Upanishads, with their insistence on knowledge and reflection as necessary steps to salvation and their restriction of religious privileges to the upper castes alone. Here, too, in the Gita, was a God who could be "touched with the feeling of our infirmities" (Heb. IV. 14), who made Himself man by sheer love for erring humanity and who vouchsafed salvation to all who sought in faith and love the precious gift of Vishnu. How such doctrines of incarnation and devotion can conquer the hearts of men is attested by the 450 million Christians who

can see in this Athanasian feat of Vishnuism its essential strength. What was wanted after the long reign of Brahmanism, with its intellectualism, was a personal God, invested with a warm humanity, and this demand was met in the person of Vishnu-Krishna.

It is not surprising that the Bhagavad-Gita should have been likened to the New Testament because of (a) the doctrine of incarnation and the language in which it is expressed, reminding the reader of the Fourth Gospel; (b) the *human* in Jesus the Christ and in Vishnu-Krishna; (c) the gospel of Bakhti, suggesting Jesus' gospel in the Sermon on the Mount, of a heavenly Father's love and the need of reproducing it in human life; (d) the mystical method of Bakhti, reminding us of Paul's "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ."

Did then the Hindu author borrow his thought from Christian sources? No, because the Bhagavad-Gita was finally edited not later than 10 A.D., and the earliest of the New Testament books is Paul's letter to the Galatians 52 A.D., while the Fourth Gospel was produced not earlier than 120 A.D. Scholars give the probable date of the Mahabharata, in which this story of the Bhagavad-Gita is inlaid with an individuality of its own, as the third century B.C., but the epic itself reaches back perhaps another four or six hundred years. During a thousand years this great classic of the Hindus was forming. Nor is there any evidence to support the belief that Christian authors had access to the Gita or that either Jesus or Paul

was ever in India. There is no evidence to support borrowing by either side.

Finally, we have to note the deeper meaning of the poem as an allegory of the moral life. In one of the Upanishads, we read of a chariot and a charioteer: "Know the self to be sitting in the chariot, the body to be the chariot, the intellect the charioteer, and the mind the reins. The senses they call the horses, the objects of the senses their roads. When he is in union with the body, the senses and the mind, then wise people call him the enjoyer. He who has no understanding and whose mind is never firmly held, his senses are unmanageable, like vicious horses of a charioteer. But he who has understanding, and whose mind is always firmly held, his senses are under control, like good horses of a charioteer. . . . He reaches the end of his journey, and that is the highest place of Vishnu." (Katha. 1, 3, 3.)

And since the Gita, as we have seen, is based on the Upanishads, we see the symbolism of the story, Indeed the poem itself states the symbolic idea in the following passage: Krishna speaks—

"The dust is on the mirror.
The smoke hides the flame.
So is your soul's insight.
Behold Me not with your two outer eyes which are blind
But with the eye of your spirit."

Following the lead of this symbolism, it is clear that the blind king is any one who looks at his own

problems blindly, with the outer eyes. The clairvoyant, Sajaya, is the eye of the spirit; the charioteer, Krishna, is the immortal soul, and the chariot is the body. Arjuna, one of the five sons of Pandu, epitomizes the five senses which the soul leads to war against the evil passions and impulses, epitomized by the five sons of Drishastra. The battlefield is the world of temptation, trial, discipline; while Victory is the reward that comes to him who follows out any one of the three known ways of realizing his identity with God who awaits each soul at the end of its path.

> "No matter which path a soul may take
> If he follow it to the end
> I, God, receive him."

Krishna does not fight for Arjuna but is only his guide, *i.e.*, each man must fight his own battles.

And this brings us to the high-water mark of ethical teaching in the Gita. It deserves special mention because we are living at a time when the world is in dire need of it. I refer to the belief in moral freedom which the Gita presupposes throughout. From start to finish the poem postulates the freedom whereby each man, far from being predestined to act in a given way, is free to contend with the hindrances that lie in the path of release from rebirths, free to choose a higher or a lower goal. No such thing as Calvinistic predestination was in the author's mind. He, like Dante, built his poem on the

capacity for moral choice as a prerequisite for moral progress. No freedom, no morality.

According to both Dante and the Gita we are not to blame for our being attracted by forbidden pleasures, we are blameworthy only to the extent that we yield to them, to the extent that we adopt them into our own will. Thus the ethical teaching of the Gita is based upon the living freewill, upon man's capacity for moral choice, which is the essential prerequisite for progress in the moral life. Now, contrast this inspiring gospel with some of the perverted preachment that is brought to us, preachment to the effect that our moral nature is no more free to resist behaving the way it does than the apple on the tree can resist the law of gravitation that pulls it to the earth, preachment on heredity and environment and constitution and temperament, that these forces make us what we are, and prevent us from acting as free moral agents. These fatalists deny the affirmation of the poet: "I am the captain of my soul." Nay, they say, the real captain of your soul is the resultant of these forces, physical, psychological, biological, *that* has made you exactly what you are. Dante would admit very promptly that heredity and environment have had their influence upon the conduct of man, but Dante would insist that of his soul he was the real captain, that when he committed an evil deed he *might* have prevented it. For the *strongest* motive is always the one that prevails, and an originally weak motive can be made

the strongest when we persistently and definitely concentrate our energy upon it.

"The greatest gift that in His largesse God
Creating made and doth most highly prize
Is the freedom of the will wherewith
The creatures of intelligence both were and are endowed." (Paradiso V.)

So the Gita sets forth a like doctrine of freedom.

Back of all the injunctions given Arjuna by Krishna is the assumption of moral capacity to fulfil them. No fatalism is bound up with Karma. Every soul is free to contend against the hindrances that lie in the path of release and ultimate attainment of bliss in the presence of Vishnu. (VI. 28.) Because the moral power to overcome these hindrances is in Arjuna as in all other men, Krishna bids him

"Subdue the senses, kill this desire,
The sinful destroyer of wisdom and self-knowledge.
O mighty-armed, destroy this enemy in the form of desire,
Difficult to overcome. (III. 41. 43.)

Latent potentialities there are in man that exalt him above crystals, trees and all the tribes of animals and forever league him with what is infinite and eternal. Having a constant residuum of capacity for improvement no matter how many times he fail, man is essentially a spiritual being and can be *fully* accounted for only in terms of a spiritual origin.

In this ethico-spiritual gospel of the Gita lies its permanent worth, not only for India, but for all the world.

## CHAPTER II

## THE BIBLE OF BUDDHISM

### (a) The canon of Buddhistic Scriptures.

We come now to the Sacred Scriptures of that religion which has the distinction of being the first in the history of the world to transcend national boundaries and become actually international. Within three centuries of the death of its Founder, Buddhism was made the state religion of India, under King Asoka (250 B.C.). But eventually (1000 A.D.) after a protracted and fierce conflict with Brahmanism (which contended with Buddhism for the religious control of India), it was driven out of India, the land of its birth, and found its way to Ceylon, Thibet, Burmah, Siam, Malaysia, China, Manchuria, Korea, Mongolia and Japan. In these countries it has undergone strange transformations so that of the five hundred millions of adherents calling themselves Buddhists, scarcely any represent the religion of the Founder in its pristine purity.

T. W. Rhys-Davids, one of the foremost authorities on the subject, has said: "Not one of the five hundred millions who offer flowers now and then on Buddhist shrines, who are more or less moulded by Buddhist teachings, is only or altogether a Bud-

dhist."* The late Oxford professor of Sanskrit, Monier Williams, discussing the degeneration of the religion, shows what a far cry it is from present-day Buddhism to the teachings of the Founder: "Starting from a very simple proposition that all life involves sorrow, and that all sorrow results from indulging desires which ought to be suppressed—Buddhism has branched out into a vast number of complicated and self-contradictory propositions and negations. Its teaching has become both negative and positive, both agnostic and gnostic. It passes from apparent atheism and materialism to theism, polytheism and spiritualism. It is, under one aspect, mere pessimism; under another, pure philanthropy; under another, monastic communism; under another, high morality; under another, a variety of materialistic philosophy; under another, simple demonology; under another, a mere farrago of superstitions, including necromancy, witchcraft, idolatry and fetishism. In some form or other it may be held along with almost any religion, and embraces something from almost every creed. It has in its moral code much common ground with Christianity; and in its mediaeval and modern developments it presents examples of forms, ceremonies, litanies, monastic communities and hierarchical organizations scarcely distinguishable from those of Roman Catholicism. And yet a greater contrast than that

* *Buddhism*, p. 7.

presented by the essential doctrines of Buddhism and Christianity can scarcely be imagined." *

But our concern in this series of studies is with the Buddhism of Gotama, its Founder, and with Sacred Scriptures that constitute our ultimate source of information concerning it. These Scriptures are called *Pitakas*. The word means "baskets" and as here used refers not to the ordinary receptacle of that name but to tradition as symbolized in those archaeological excavations which are conducted with the aid of baskets handed from workman to workman standing in a long line from the spot whence the earth is removed to that where it is deposited for examination. So a long line of teachers and pupils have handed on the treasures of Buddhistic teaching, as a tradition, in three *Pitakas* (Ti-Pitakas).

First, the *Vinaya-Pitaka,* or rules of discipline for the order of monks. For, Gotama, on achieving his eager quest for a solution of the riddle of life, gathered about him a community of disciples to propagate his discovery, an order of monks, whose hair and beard were shorn and who wore a yellow robe, made of rags. The *Vinaya-Pitaka* then (translated in Sacred Books of the East, Vol. XIII) is the "Discipline-basket" of ordinances said to have been laid down by the Buddha as occasion suggested their necessity. Many of these rules have to do with the homes of the monks, their beds and rugs and clothes. Other regulations relate to the intercourse of the

* *Buddhisim,* pp. 13, 14.

members of the order one with another, and with the people of the community, while the matter of conduct towards women is treated with minute detail.*

Second, the *Sutta-Pitaka,* "Sermon-basket," consisting of four great *Nikayas* (collections) including 186 dialogues of the Buddha and his disciples.† This *Pitaka* is the most essential, the most original and the most attractive portion of the Buddhist Scriptures. Much of it corresponds in character to what among Christians is called a Gospel. Here it is that we find Gotama's ethical teaching, more especially his gospel of "the four noble Truths" and of "the Noble Path," which ends in Arahatship or saint-hood,—a foretaste of Nirvana.

Third, the *Abhidhamma-Pitaka,* "Expansion-basket," expansion, *i.e.,* of the *Dhamma* which means the Truth, the Norm. The most interesting of the seven books composing this third of the Pitakas is that known as the *Katha-Vatthu* or "Account of Opinions." It sets forth the 252 most dangerous of the heresies rampant in King Asoka's reign during which the book was written. Abhiddhamma used to be translated "metaphysics," but this is clearly an error as metaphysics has no place in Buddhism for reasons to be presented in the next chapter.

* For illustration of these see the opening chapters called "The Patimokka," one of the oldest Buddhist text-books, S. B. E. XIII, pp. 7-66.

† See *Sacred Books of the East,* Vol. XI, for an English translation of twelve of these dialogues.

As with other ancient peoples, notably the Hindus, so with the Buddhists, the art of writing was not taken advantage of for any kind of literary purpose; its use was wholly confined to recording short messages or notes or private letters or advertisements of a public character. Thus the text of the three Pitakas, before it was reduced to writing, was handed down for about three hundred years (550-250 B.C.) solely by memory. It lived only in the minds of the Bikkhus (disciples) and by them was handed down in the manner that seems to us moderns so unsafe, yet the substantial accuracy of the transmitted text of trained repeaters is now established. Belief in the correctness of the ancient tradition has been tersely expressed in the well-known stanza of the Ceylon Chroniclers of the first century before our era:

"The text of the three Pitakas and the commentary thereon
The wise Bikkhus of former time had handed down by word of mouth.
The then Bikkhus perceiving how all beings do decay
Meeting together wrote them in books that the Dhamma (Truth) might last long." *

The total extent of the three Pitakas is about ten thousand pages octavo, as printed by the Pali Text Society. Were our King James version of the Bible to be printed in the same form and type, it would occupy some five thousand pages. Hence, the

* S. B. E. XIII, p. 35.

Buddhist Bible of *Ti-Pitakas* is substantially double the size of our English Bible.*

But in addition to these canonical books there are certain lesser works of a miscellaneous character that in the Third Century B.C. came to be included in the list of authoritative scriptures and treated as appendices to the Pitakas.

One of these is a short tract that opens with the so-called Buddhist creed:—

> "I take my refuge in the Buddha.
> I take my refuge in the Dhamma.
> I take my refuge in the Order."

A sort of "first reader" it is, for young neophytes after they had joined the order.

Another of these supplements to the Pitakas is the *Dhammapada,* a poetical treatise of 423 stanzas for each of twenty-six selected points of Buddhist ethics.

Typical of the contents of the Dhammapada are the following verses descriptive of "a first-class person":

"Not by . . . lineage nor by caste is one a first-class person. He is a first-class person in whom are truth and righteousness and purity.

"By whomsoever no evil is done in deed or word or thought,—him I call a first-class person, who is guarded in these three.

"Him I call a first-class person who, though he has committed no offence, yet endures reproach,

* For a complete list of the 29 books of the three *Pitakas* see S. B. E. XI, pp. 36-7.

stripes and bonds, and who has endurance for his force and strength for his army.

"He is a first-class person who does not give way to anger, who is careful of religious duties, who is pure, upright and controlled.

"Whoso is wise with deep wisdom, seeing the right way and the wrong, and has reached the goal, —him I call a first-class person.

"Him I call a first-class person who, without hurting any creatures, whether feeble or strong, does not kill nor cause slaughter.

"Him I call a first-class person who is tolerant with the intolerant, mild with the violent, and free from greed among the greedy.

"Whoso takes nothing, small or great, good or bad, unless it be given him,—he is a first-class person." *

Included also in the Canon is a collection of stanzas, called *Thera-Theri-Gatha* or "Songs of the Elders" attributed to 107 of the leading Theras (Monks) and 73 of the leading Theris (Nuns) in the Order during Gotama's life-time. Speaking of the latter, Rhys-Davids said: "Women of acknowledged culture are here represented as being the teachers of men and as expounding to less advanced Brethren or Sisters in the Order, the deeper and more subtle points in the Buddhist philosophy of life."

Finally, in this collection of authoritative sacred scripture, eventually incorporated into the Canon,

* *The Dhammapada,* 391-409. S. B. E. Vol. X, 1.80 foll.

are the verses of the *Jatakas*—stories of the 550 previous births of the Buddha, they are called—but in reality a potpourri of folk-lore unmatched anywhere in the world in point of antiquity and of purity. Each story has its canonical verse, attributed to the Buddha in one or another of his previous births and unintelligible save in conjunction with the uncanonical prose commentary. Before leaving these *Jataka* tales, it should be remarked that they contain deep truths and are calculated to impress lessons of great moral beauty. This is particularly true of the tale of "the Merchant of Seri," reminding the reader of the parable of "the pearl of great price" in the Gospels; the tale of "the Measures of Rice" and the tale of "the Banyan Deer" which gave its life to save a roe and her young—an example of the noblest kind of self-sacrifice. As a source of moral instruction for children of the primary grade the Jatakas hold a place second to none.

### (b) Gotama and the rise of Buddhism

Our study of the Hindu Vedas, Brahmanas and Upanishads acquainted us with the successive stages in the evolution of Hinduism down to about the year 500 B.C. We saw how, out of the original Aryan religion with its simple Vedic sacrifices and hymns to a few personified forces of nature, there was gradually built up an immense Pantheon, an elaborate ceremonial, an ecclesiastical hierarchy, a caste-classification, a doctrine of the infallibility of the

Vedas, and a mass of philosophico-theological speculation regarding God, the soul and salvation. No one can read these Hindu Scriptures without observing that the people of India had become so steadily and increasingly engrossed in theology and ritual as to mistake theories and forms of religion for its essence. And whenever such engrossment in speculation and ceremonialism occurs, there invariably follows a reaction in favor of devotion to personal morality and public service. It has been so in the history of every religion, the reaction signifying not that fault was found with the ritual or speculation as such, but that religion had become so deficient in vital and vitalizing influence that the moral issues of life had been allowed to suffer almost total eclipse. Buddhism was essentially a reaction of this kind, inaugurated about 500 B.C. by one Gotama, who had himself been reared in the Brahmanism against which he then rebelled. He is known in the Scriptures by various other names: *Siddhartha* (one in whom wishes are fulfilled); *Bhagavat* (the Blessed One); *Tathagata* (like his predecessors); *Çakya-Muni* (monk of the Çakya tribe). He was called "the Buddha" because it was believed by his followers that he is the Enlightened One. For "Buddha" means enlightened, as "Christ" means anointed,—each name not the name of a man, but of an office he was thought to have fulfilled. Jesus was called "the Christ" because it was believed by certain of his Judean contemporaries that he was the long expected "Anointed One" who would de-

liver the Jews from their Roman oppressors and restore the prosperity of David's day. Jesus, they thought, was the Messiah and "Christ" is but the Greek equivalent for the Hebrew "Messiah." Similarly Gotama was called "The Buddha" because it was believed he had shed new light on the problem of salvation and so was worthy to be called "The Enlightened One."

Thus, while in Greece Heraclitus and Pythagoras were shaping their philosophies, while Nehemiah and his associates were reorganizing the Hebrew nation in Jerusalem after the Babylonian captivity, while Confucius was fulfilling the part of statesman and moralist in China, the founder of Buddhism was protesting against certain errors and evils in the Brahmanism in which he had been brought up and supplementing his protest with a positive, constructive gospel of permanent escape from a world in which suffering, sorrow, disease and death were the common lot; for to achieve such escape was salvation, Nirvana.

The simple ceremonial of "Vedism" had developed into an elaborate and expensive ritual. The Brahman priests had encompassed the whole of life with religious observances and around the daily ritual they had woven an extraordinary web of mystical ideas. The ceremonies of birth, death and marriage were in their hands. Moreover, the sacrifices of earth had a counterpart in the skies and a vast system of terrestrial and celestial connections was established by which the priests claimed that these

performances kept the universe going and declared themselves "human Gods." Again, asceticism had come to be regarded as a virtue of the highest type and a program of physical austerities had been worked out. It was believed that such austerities could secure superhuman powers of vision or of locomotion. To wear bark dress, to feed on berries and roots, to eat but once in four or five days, to hang one's head downward like a bat, to stand on one leg, these and many other self-torturing inventions had great attraction for many people even as had the pillar for Simeon Stylites. Once more, caste-distinctions had grown increasingly and obnoxiously exclusive and speculation on the hereafter had become so engrossing as to cause neglect of the practical humanities. Nay, more, defects in the prevailing Vedanta philosophy were discovered by the Buddha so that a new basis had to be found for the hope of salvation. Against these features of the religion into which he was born Gotama now registered emphatic protests. He denounced the costly ritual as wasteful and unethical. He repudiated asceticism as a practice inimical to the health of both body and mind. He pronounced caste distinctions to be both degrading and undemocratic. Intellectual speculation on the hereafter he deprecated as being both futile and unwarranted. The Vedanta belief in the existence of *Brahma*—a permanent and supreme Power, the Soul of the universe; the belief in the existence of a soul in man, an entity, capable of transmigration at death; the belief in man's ultimate

absorption into *Brahma*—all these philosophico-theological beliefs he regarded as superstitions, unworthy the support of enlightened people. In such terse sentences as the following did the Buddha embody his reform:

"Enough of rites that no one understands, in honor of useless spirits. Every man makes his own fate. I preach simple truths, I have no esoteric doctrine. My way of salvation is open to all, to the lowly as well as to the exalted. Not learning, not wealth, not high birth makes a man a worthy Brahman, but a pure heart, a good character, a noble aim in life. Better is a slave who lives nobly than a noble who lives slavishly. To be a slave of lusts is to miss the first step to emancipation from rebirth."

Such, in brief, was the fivefold reaction of Gotama on its negative side. Had it ended there, no Buddhism would have been born. For, no movement can ever live that is built solely upon negations. No future ever awaits a cause grounded upon iconoclasm. Every religious system that survives and perpetuates itself does so only on the basis of its affirmations. Let us see what they were and how he gave them expression in the Pitakas.

But first we must take note of the sub-stratum of his entire teaching, the "Four Noble Truths." Without full understanding and appreciation of these, salvation (final escape from the round of rebirths), he held, is impossible. Differ as Buddhists may on other points, they all are agreed on this. In the *Vinaya-Pitaka* Gotama says:

"It is through not understanding and grasping four noble truths, O brethren, that we have had to run so long, to wander so long in this weary path of reincarnation, both you and I. This, O Bhikkhus, is the noble truth of *suffering:* birth is suffering, decay is suffering, illness is suffering, death is suffering, presence of objects we hate is suffering, separation from objects we love is suffering, not to obtain what we desire is suffering. Briefly, the fivefold clinging to existence is suffering.

"This, O Bhikkhus, is the noble truth of the *cause* of suffering: thirst, that leads to rebirth, accompanied by pleasure and lust, finding its delight here and there. This thirst is threefold; namely, thirst for pleasure, thirst for existence, thirst for prosperity.

"This, O Bhikkhus, is the noble truth of the *cessation* of suffering: (it ceases with) the complete cessation of this thirst,—a cessation which consists in the absence of every passion,—with the abandoning of this thirst, with the doing away with it, with the deliverance from it, with the destruction of desire.

"This, O Bhikkhus, is the noble truth of *the path* which leads to the cessation of suffering, the holy eightfold path; that is to say, right belief, right aspiration, right speech, right conduct, right means of livelihood, right endeavor, right memory, right meditation."

How tame and prosaic this "path" must have seemed to a people steeped in ceremonialism, fasting and penances! How tame and prosaic, perchance,

it appears to us unless we happen to have read the detailed exposition of each in the Sutta-Pitaka. As an index of the wealth of ethical and philosophical content in each of these constituent parts of the Path let me synopsize the first of the eight, "Right Views," as expounded at length in the forty-third of the 186 dialogues of the Buddha, preserved for us in the Sutta-Pitaka.

The man of right views is free from superstition, free from erroneous theories of the world, God, the soul. He realizes the impermanence of everything and of every being, whether human or divine. He knows that nothing permanently *is,* that everything *becomes,* that the world-stuff is eternal, that out of it all things and beings came, we know not how; and that it is a foolish waste of time to try to find out because the main concern of men should be to attain "Arahatship," that blessed state attainable here on earth, in which, as a result of faithful allegiance to the eightfold noble path, one is prepared for Nirvana and saved from the possibility of rebirth. The man of right views understands that while it is legitimate to argue from one cause to the next, he cannot hope to reach an ultimate cause. Life he knows is a wheel, causation a chain, beginning with ignorance, "unconscious productive ignorance" (the unconscious "will to live") from which spring consciousness, sensation, thirst, attachment, birth, suffering, old age, death, rebirth;—Karma (the fruit of one's deeds) being the link that binds each life with its predecessor. The man of right views understands

that there is no reality corresponding to "soul" as a permanent, human entity, and that the notion of its final absorption into Brahma, the Oversoul, is also erroneous. For this latter, he knows to be just as unreal as the soul. Again, the man of right views understands what is evil and what is good and the roots of each. He knows the basis of bodily and mental life, how they originate and how they ultimately cease. As a result, he gets rid of sensuality and of ill-will toward others. Moreover, he knows what suffering is, its cause and its cessation, how it is bound up with the temporary individuality that results from the evanescent union of the five "Skandas" or groups of qualities that make up each individual (corporeity, consciousness, sensations, feelings, desires). He knows how suffering results from desire and how it ceases only after he has entered on the eightfold noble path at the entrance to which are the four noble truths. He perceives the "fetters," or failings, all of which are sloughed off in "Arahatship," the vestibule of Nirvana. And when he knows all this, his insight is right, his views are correct and the man is endowed with an abiding sense of truth.

### (c) The Sutta-Pitaka. Gotama's constructive ethical programme

The survival of Buddhism was assured when after putting forth his negative criticisms of the Brahmanism in which he was reared, the Founder followed them up with a constructive program of ethical and

religious reform. Let us review briefly and seriatim the affirmations that offset his negations and see how they were given expression in passages from the second of the Pitakas, the Sutta-Pitaka (Sermon-basket).

I. In place of a dry and forbidding ceremonialism, he offered a fervent and inspiring morality. "Not abstinence from fish or meat, not wearing rough garments, not offering sacrifices, can make a man pure. Your low desires are in you, and you make your outside clean. What is the use of platted hair, O fool? What of the raiment of goat skins? Within thee there is ravening, but the outside thou makest clean. Taking life and stealing, falsehood and fraud, anger and envy, sensual indulgence, mercilessness and pride, these are the things that defile, but not the eating of flesh." (Dhammapada XXVI. 294.) Elsewhere we read:

"The Buddha's City of Righteousness," said the venerable Nagasena to King Milinda, "has righteousness for its rampart, the fear of sin for its moat, knowledge for its battlement over the city gate, and zeal for the watchtower above that, faith for the pillars at its base, mindfulness for the watchman at the gate and wisdom for the terrace above." (The Questions of King Milinda—S. B. S. XXXVI. 212.)

Mention must be made here of the Buddha's Decalogue as exemplifying the fervent morality that was to displace the prevailing dry ceremonialism of his day. In the Sutta-Pitaka we find ten command-

ments. Comparing them with the Decalogue of the Old Testament, we note the following:

1. Ye shall slay no living thing"="thou shalt not kill."

2. "Ye shall not take that which is not given"="thou shalt not steal."

3. "Ye shall not act wrongfully touching the bodily desires"="thou shalt not commit adultery."

4. "Ye shall speak no lie"—no equivalent in the Decalogue.*

5. "Ye shall drink no maddening drink"—no equivalent in the Decalogue.

These five were binding on clergy and laity alike, but the remaining five were imposed on the clergy alone:—

6. "Accept no gold or silver."

7. "Shun luxurious beds."

8. "Abstain from late meals."

9. "Avoid public amusements."

10. "Abstain from expensive dress."

Reverting to the *Dhammapada* we find this poetical summary of the Buddha's positive teaching.

"To succor father and mother,
To cherish wife and child,
To follow a peaceful calling,
This is the greatest blessing.

"To give alms, to live religiously,
To give help to relatives,
To do blameless deeds,
This is the greatest blessing.

"To cease and abstain from sin,
To eschew strong drink,
To be diligent in good deeds,
This is the greatest blessing.

* "Thou shalt not bear false witness" is not the equivalent.

"Reverence and lowliness,
Contentment and gratitude,
To receive religious teaching at due seasons,
This is the greatest blessing.

"To be long-suffering and meek,
To associate with the disciples of Buddha,
To hold religious discourse at due seasons,
This is the greatest blessing.

"Temperance and chastity,
Discernment of the four great Truths,
The prospect of Nirvana,
This is the greatest blessing."

II. For the two extremes of asceticism and sensualism, the Buddha substituted a "middle path," adding to the persuasive eloquence with which he preached it the more potent influence of personal example. No graver warnings are probably to be found in the whole range of religious literature than the Buddha's calm and penetrating analysis of the manifold dangers besetting the ascetic's pride; nor will one find elsewhere a more fervent denunciation of the sin of surrender to the lusts of the flesh than we meet in the Sutta-Pitaka.

"There are two extremes, O Bikkhus, (disciples) which he who has given up the world ought to avoid. What are these two extremes? A life given to pleasures, devoted to pleasures and lusts: this is degrading, sensual, vulgar, ignoble and profitless; and a life given to mortifications: this is painful, ignoble and profitless. By avoiding these two extremes, O Bikkhus, the Tathagata has gained the

knowledge of the Middle Path which leads to insight and to wisdom, which conduces to calm, to knowledge, to enlightenment, to Nirvana. It is the holy eight-fold path, namely, Right Belief, Right Aspiration, Right Speech, Right Conduct, Right Means of Livelihood, Right Endeavor, Right Memory, Right Meditation."

A Path of grave and strenuous ethical self-discipline it is (as we have seen),* designed to cover the whole field of behavior within and without. But it issues, said the Buddha, in the supreme desideratum of life,—permanent deliverance from rebirth. To start on the Path one must have acquired, (1) Right Views, that is, a grasp of the four fundamental truths concerning suffering; proper ideas of life's meaning and man's place in the cosmos; views free from superstitions and delusions; looking the facts of existence fairly in the face. This will lead him directly to (2) Right Resolve, begetting aspirations and determinations worthy an intelligent human being; the resolve to renounce all sensual desire and quickening a kind and benevolent disposition toward everyone. (3) Right Speech, abstaining from all kinds of falsehood, vituperation, gossip. (4) Right Action, in perfect harmony with acknowledged ideals. (5) Right Livelihood, *i.e.,* right means of sustenance, making one's livelihood in a proper way—a far-reaching ethical proposition which, if rigidly observed, would play sad havoc with many modes of livelihood honored among us of the Occident. (6)

* Pp. 74-75.

Right Effort, assiduous self-discipline and control; a never-flagging activity of the mind directed to ethical ends.

These six of the eight Paths are ways of *moral* self-discipline, and as such may be grouped under one head. The next (7) Right Reflection, may be called *intellectual* discipline, while the last (8) Right Meditation is *mystical* discipline, a series of trances through which man rises to the bliss of ecstasies that lie beyond consciousness; the peace that follows on the sense of victory won; the realization of Buddha's holiness, of complete preparedness for permanent release from rebirth (Nirvana).

"The Blessed One addressed the brethren and said: Behold now brethren, I exhort you, saying, decay is inherent in all component things. Work out your salvation with diligence. This was the last word of the Tathagata."*

One might think suicide a shorter way to Nirvana than this eight-fold Path, but the Buddha taught that suicide sets an example which in the hearts of others, according to circumstance, "bears evil fruit"; it causes "consternation and unrest" and so cannot "lead to the cessation of suffering"; under no conditions could it conduce to the attainment of Nirvana. In the uncanonical sacred scripture of Buddhism, already referred to and known as the "Questions of King Milinda" (to which further reference will be made later), it is written: "The good man, O King, perfect in uprightness, is like a medi-

* S. B. E. XI, 114.

cine to men in being an antidote to the poison of evil; he is like water to men in laying the dust and the impurities of evil dispositions; he is like a jewel-treasure to men in bestowing upon them all attainments in righteousness; he is like a teacher to men in that he trains them in all good; he is like a good guide to men in that he points out to them the path of peace. It was in order that so good a man as that, so full of benefit to all beings, might not be done away with that the Blessed One, out of his mercy toward all beings, laid down that injunction when he said, 'A brother is not, O Bikkhus, to commit suicide. Whosoever does so shall be dealt with according to the law.' This is the reason that the Blessed One prohibited self-slaughter." (IV. 4. 14.)

Clearly then, he who imagines that but for the supposition of transmigration of soul, suicide would be a more appropriate and safer method of reaching Nirvana than the eight-fold Path of righteousness has no inkling of the significance of Buddhistic salvation.

III. To do away with the degrading and undemocratic caste-distinctions, the Buddha proposed the ennobling and inclusive doctrine of brotherhood. Before his time, religion was the birthright of certain classes and salvation the prerogative of selected people. Others outside the pale had to secure the blessings of religion through the good offices of the privileged ones. The Buddha swept away all such distinctions. The "gates of the kingdom of righteousness" founded by him were thrown open to all

who would strive to enter, irrespective of class, caste and color; the message of deliverance was addressed to the whole world. That marks an important event, a turning point in the history of religion, nay, of mankind. Buddhism is sometimes described as "a revolt against the caste system," but this is certainly erroneous for in the Founder's day the caste system was still in an *undeveloped* stage. But notwithstanding the Buddha's inveighing against caste distinctions, it was in the main the upper classes of society that constituted his followers. Not they who live under what seem intolerable conditions are most dissatisfied with life and eager for escape from it. Rather has pessimism been the disease of the well-to-do; and they were in the majority among the hearers of Gotama.

His opposition to caste-distinctions was expressed in the following sayings:

"My doctrine makes no distinction between high and low, rich and poor. It is like the sky. It has room for all, and like water it washes all alike."

"Ananda (the beloved disciple) coming to a well asked a girl of the despised caste of the Tschandalas for a drink of water, but she, fearing a gift from *her* hands would make him unclean, declined, whereupon Ananda said "My sister, I did not ask concerning thy caste or thy family. I beg water of thee, if thou canst give it me."

"To him in whom love dwells, the whole world is but one family."

"As a mother even at the risk of her own life

protects her son, her only son, so he who has recognized the Truth (of brotherhood) cultivates good will without measure among all beings, unstinted, unmixed with any feeling of making distinctions or showing preferences." Dhammapada V.

IV. For vain speculation on insoluble questions the Buddha substituted ethical practices to improve personal life and social relations. As an index of his attitude toward fruitless theorizing and his insistence upon the duty of wasting no time "on that which does not profit," take the following from one of the ethical sermons included in the Sutta-Pitaka.

"Suppose a man were wounded with a poisoned arrow. His friends would urge him to have it treated by a physician or surgeon. Suppose then the wounded man should say: 'I will not have this arrow taken out until I learn to what caste the man who wounded me belonged, what his name and family were, what his size, physical appearance, and place of residence were, and the exact nature of the materials used in making the arrow, the bowstring, and the bow.' What would become of such a man? Would he not die of the poisoned wound before he found out the answers to all these questions? And what difference do all the questions really make? It is just so with the Buddha's doctrine of the religious life. The religious life does not depend on the nature of the world or on the nature of the soul. Whatever the nature of the world or of the soul may be, there still remains existence, which is suffering, and the elimination of which it is my business to

teach. I have not elucidated the questions you refer to because they profit not, nor do they have anything to do with the fundamentals of religion, nor do they tend to solution. What I have elucidated is only that which does profit, which does concern the fundamentals of religion, and which leads to solution, namely this: the truth of suffering, the origin of suffering, the release from suffering, and the path to the release from suffering. Sutta-Pitaka S. B. E. XV.

Many were the puzzles brought the Buddha by the intellectually curious: Was the world finite or infinite in space and time? Would the saint who had trod the eight-fold path exist after death or would he not exist? But to these and other such questions, the Buddha brought answer that it is of no concern to earnest men to know, for the evils of life and the necessity of salvation remain the same. "Let that which I have not revealed remain unrevealed."

And when at times he met one of these questions with silence, and it provoked a charge of ignorance, he would reply "Did I ever promise to tell you?" and then called attention to the fact that all such questions had no *moral* significance and that they did not lead to purification from lust or to "release from disease, old age, death and rebirth"—the paramount issues from which no one should permit himself to be diverted.

So bent was the Buddha on turning men's thoughts away from fruitless speculation on the location and nature of Nirvana to the crying needs of

the living present that he refused again and again to answer the questions "Where and what is Nirvana?" Instead, he pointed to the Path that leads thither. Incidentally, it may be noted that in the same spirit and from a like motive, Jesus, when asked "Are there few that be saved," replied "Strive to enter in," * *i.e.*, be not anxiously concerned about the population of the new Kingdom of God on earth, but rather seek so to live as to be worthy of residence there.

For Gotama there were no enduring ontological realities whatsoever; there was only "perpetual flux." For him Brahma was not "The Everlasting One, the Unchanging One, the Father of all that are and are to be." For him no such Being existed because the interminable succession of world-ages has no beginning, no guide, save Karma, and no end. In all our experience, he argued, there is no permanence attaching to anything; all we know is the fact of perpetual flux. Our consciousness attests only a continuous stream of everchanging sensations, conceptions, emotions. "We know only becoming; of changeless fixed being there is no sign."

V. Belief in the infallibility of the Vedas the Buddha surrendered on the ground that infallibility is not for fallible man, and that his safest guide to knowledge of the Truth is in independent, enlightened thought.

"Be ye lamps unto yourselves;
Betake yourselves to no external refuge;

* Luke XIII, 23.

Hold fast to the truth as a lamp;
Hold fast as a refuge to the truth;
Whosoever shall be a lamp unto themselves
It is they who shall reach the topmost height."
(Sutta-Pitaka; S. B. E. XV. 38.)

VI. As against the notion, inherited from Vedism, that the gods can influence human affairs, the Buddha took the ground that they themselves seem to be in need of help.

"The veil is rent
Which blinded me. I am as all these men
Who cry upon their gods and are not heard,
Or are not heeded—yet there must be aid!
Perchance the gods have need of help themselves
Being so feeble that when sad lips cry
They can not save."
(Edwin Arnold, "Light of Asia" Book III.)

Moreover, the Buddha held that no god can determine the fate of anyone because each human being has the determination of his fate in his own hands and in strict accordance with the operation of Karma.

Such, in brief, was the constructive gospel Gotama preached in the wake of his iconoclastic protests.

A distinctly *exoteric* gospel it was, as he himself insisted. Nowhere is his abhorrence of esoteric or veiled teaching more forcefully registered than in the following paragraph from that part of the Sutta-Pitaka called "the Book of the Great Decease," a passage which proves how misleading is the notion

to which the theosophist A. P. Sinnett, gave currency in his "Esoteric Buddhism."

"I have preached the Truth without making any distinction between exoteric and esoteric doctrine; for in respect of the truth, O Ananda, the Tathagata has no such thing as the closed fist of a teacher who keeps some things back. . . . It may be, brethren, that there may be doubt or misgiving in the mind of some brother as to the Buddha, or the Dhamma, or the Path. Inquire freely, brethren. Do not have to reproach yourselves afterwards with the thought 'Our teacher was face to face with us and we failed to inquire of the Blessed One when we were thus face to face with him.'" (Sutta-Pitaka; S. B. E. XI. 36. 113.)

### (d) The Abhidhamma-Pitaka. The Soul, Karma, Reincarnation, Nirvana

The philosophical ideas bound up with the Buddha's ethical teaching are given us in minute detail in the *Abhidhamma-Pitaka.* The "expansion-Pitaka" it literally is, enlarging on what had already been set forth in the other two Pitakas, *e.g.* the soul and its impermanence as contrasted with the conception of personality and its persistence; the operation of the law of Karma and the allied doctrine of reincarnation, as contrasted with transmigration. Here, too, is additional discourse of the Buddha on the subject of "Nirvana"—the ultimate outcome of that process of ethical self-discipline, called "the noble eight-fold Path."

This third of the three Pitakas is far more difficult reading than either of the others. So diffuse are its manifold expositions, so severely do the chapters with their repetitions tax the reader's patience and perseverance, that one turns with grateful relief to an alternative source of information already referred to, a literary work of art which, though uncanonical, yet takes rank among the Sacred Books of Buddhism, second only to the Pitakas themselves. It is known as *The Questions of King Milinda,* and has been included in the series of English translations edited by the late Max Müller,—"The Sacred Books of the East," volumes XXXV and XXXVI. This uncanonical but sacred book, consists of imaginary conversations between Milinda (Menander)—the Greek king who carried on, in Bactria, the dominion founded by Alexander the Great—and "the venerable Nagasena," a thorough-going Buddhist of the old school. "The questions" raised by the King concern for the most part the soul, death, continued identity after death, reincarnation, Karma and Nirvana. And Nagasena, in offering his answers, almost always refers to some portion of the Abhidhamma-Pitaka, one of our fountain-sources of information for the teaching of the Buddha. *The Questions of King Milinda* being a work of decided literary charm, it is not to be wondered at that it occupies a unique position in the sacred literature of the Buddhists, or that, while lacking the canonical status of the Pitakas, it is yet considered of equal authoritative value. Let us look at these basic ideas

underlying the teaching of Gotama and see how they have been given expression in the sacred scripture.

## The Soul

All metaphysical systems, contemporary with the Buddha's doctrine of salvation, assumed that there is a soul, an ego, which, with its load of deed-effects, passes from life to life in the reincarnation process, receiving in each new birth its due of Karma-compensation. But the Buddha denied the reality of any such entity commonly called the soul. According to him, the empirical individual is only a transient combination of five components (Skandhas),—bodiliness, sensation, perception, predisposition, consciousness,—and at death this complex is resolved into its several impermanent elements. The subject of the very first sermon preached to "the five disciples" with whom he began his work, was the absence of any sign of "soul" in any of the constituent elements of individual life. That sermon is embodied in the *Mahavagga* of the *Vinaya Pitaka.* There we read:

"The Blessed One thus spake to the five disciples—
The body, O, Disciples, is not the self.
If the *body* were the self, the body would not be subject to disease,
But since the body is not the self,
Therefore the body is subject to disease."

*Sensation,* O disciples is not the self,
Nor is *perception* the self,
The *Sankharas,* (the dispositions) are not the self;
*Consciousness* is not the self,"

In another passage we read:

"Now, what do you think, O, Disciples?

Is the body permanent or perishable?

'It is perishable, Lord.'

"And that which is perishable, does it cause pain or joy?"

'It causes pain, Lord.'

"And that which is perishable, painful, subject to change, is it possible to say of it 'This is mine, this am I, this is myself.' "

'That is impossible, Lord.'

"Therefore, O, Disciples, whatever the body has been, will be and is now, gross or subtle, distant or near,

All that body is not mine, is not me, is not myself."

Once more the Buddha expressed the same thought in these four lines:

"What is impermanent is suffering.
What is suffering is not I.
What is not I is not mine.
It is not I, it is not myself."

In the *Questions of King Milinda* the same conviction is expressed by the venerable Nagasena in conversation with the King as to his name.

"I am known as Nagasena, O, King, and it is by that name that my brethren in the faith address me. But although parents give such a name as Nagasena or Virasena, yet this, Sire, is only a generally understood term, a designation in common use; for there

is no permanent individuality (no soul) involved in the matter." (II. 11.) Elsewhere in the same book it is written:

"The King said: Is there such a thing as a soul? And Nagasena, with discourse drawn from the Abhidhamma convinced the King there is no such thing as a soul." (II. 2. 3. 6.)

"The venerable Nagasena said to the King 'Explain to me what is the chariot in which you came. Is it the pole, or the axle, or the wheels, or the framework, or the yoke, or the spokes, or is it all these parts that are the chariot?' To all of which he answered 'No.' 'What then is the chariot you say you came in?' 'It is on account of its having all these parts that it comes under the generally understood term of chariot.' 'Very good, your Majesty has rightly grasped the meaning of chariot. Even so is it on account of the thirty-two kinds of organic matter in the human body and the five Skandhas of being that I have come under the generally understood name of Nagasena. Just as when the parts are there, the word chariot is used, so it is when the *Skandhas* are there, we talk of a soul." (Q. of K. M. II. 1. 1.)

As there is no chariot in itself, so there is no individual person in itself. Nevertheless, persons are not for that reason less real than chariots.

The *Katha-Vatthu* of the Abhidhamma places the question of the soul in the foreground of all it discusses, declaring there is but one thing, "Karma" and that which is called *atman,* or soul, is not a sepa-

rate entity, but Karma as it presents itself in any given moment: there is a self, but not a soul-substance; mind, but not mind-stuff; personality, but no *atman*. In other words, an analysis of the constituent elements of a person reveals no such soul-entity as was popularly believed to exist; only the *body* with its organs of sense, the *sensations* that stream in through them, the *perceptions* of sight, smell, taste, touch and hearing; the *samskaras* or dispositions or abilities resulting from past conduct in an earlier life, carried over as a stock of character with which to begin a new life, only these are real; but in none of them is there a soul to transmigrate.

Clearly then primitive Buddhism in its conflict with current systems based on belief in the reality of a transmigratable soul, denied its existence, but at the same time held that the thinking, feeling, aspiring soul which from experience we know ourselves to be, cannot be denied. And only when all delusions about the soul have been fully and finally renounced is one fitted, according to the Buddha, to make progress in ethical living. So long as men are fretted by fears and doubts about their souls, they remain unemancipated and unequal to pursuing the higher life that leads to cessation of rebirth.

### Reincarnation

But, if there be no permanent entity called soul to migrate from one life to the next, how can Buddhism still hold to a doctrine of reincarnation? What meaning can identity have when no soul-

entity survives the death of the body? If there be no soul to leave the body at death, to be re-born elsewhere, what then, is it that passes from one life to the next, psychologically, if not physically, continuous with the deceased, ready to suffer or enjoy what he in a previous existence had prepared for himself by his behavior? What is the real link connecting one life with the next in the series? If the real identity between a man in his present life and in the future be not a conscious soul, capable of leaving his body when dead, in what does the identity consist? That which passes from one incarnation to the next, the Buddha said, was "Karma and nothing but Karma"; the real identity, he held, is that of cause and effect, expressed in the samskaras, or deed-structures; Karma takes the place of the soul; character passing from one being to another in the succession of beings, united in destiny.

As it is written in the Sutta Pitaka:—

"Not grain, nor wealth, nor store of gold,
Not one amongst his family,
Not wife, nor daughters, nor his sons,
Nor any one that eats his bread,
Can follow him who leaves this life,
For all things must be left behind.

"But every deed a man performs,
With body, or with voice, or mind,
'Tis this that he can call his own,
This with him take as he goes hence,
This is what follows after him,
And like a shadow ne'er departs.

"Let all, then, noble deeds perform,
A treasure-store for future weal;
For merit gained this life within
Will yield a blessing in the next."

And the blessing will come not to another but to him who did the noble deeds even though he be then a different person from what he was before. Nagasena illustrates the point as follows:

"Suppose a man, O king, were to light a lamp, would it burn the night through?"

"Yes, it might do so."

"Now, is it the same flame that burns in the first watch of the night, Sir, and in the second?"

"No."

"Or the same that burns in the second watch and in the third?"

"No."

"Then is there one lamp in the first watch, and another in the second, and another in the third?"

"No. The light comes from the same lamp all the night through."

"Just so, O king, is the continuity of a person or thing maintained. One comes into being, another passes away; and the rebirth is, as it were, simultaneous. Thus neither as the same nor as another does a man go on to the last phase of his self-consciousness." (Q. of K. M. II. 2. 1.)

## Karma

Gotama held with adamantine inflexibility to the moral order. His whole view of life was founded on

the reality of it. Not even death could frustrate the operation of the law of Karma. The body might dissolve into dust, consciousness cease, but out of the years just ended, out of the thoughts just stilled, came unseen potencies which begot a new person to pursue a fresh career in accordance with that law.

The word Karma, it will be remembered,* means "deed," but refers more especially to the effect of the deed on the subsequent character of the doer. The deed itself is transient but the traces it leaves on the character endure. These are called in Sanskrit *samskaras,* in Pali (the Sanskrit dialect in which the Buddhist Scriptures were written) *sankharas,* meaning memory-structures or deed-effects. A man's character, therefore, consists of his *sankharas* which are the product of Karma and make reincarnation possible, Karma being the mysterious law that binds each existence to the next. By means of Karma the ends of justice are automatically, dispassionately, and inevitably worked out and with an eternal margin of hope, because no matter how low a man may sink in the moral scale, he can in the course of successive reincarnations raise himself to perfection at last by simply practicing the course of ethical self-discipline set forth in the Sutta-Pitaka.†

Karma-Reincarnation, then, according to the Buddha, is the reappearance of the same character, but it is no transmigration in the sense of a transfer of any

* See pp. 30-31.

† For a critique of the Karma reincarnation doctrine, see my "Faith in a Future Life," Chap. VII.

soul-substance because there is no soul-substance. The only transfer is that of the deed-structures, sankharas, which the operation of Karma mysteriously produces. But for their survival there could be no continuity beyond the dissolution of the individual in death. Rebirth depends on Karma and the person's reappearance is analogous to that of the voice in an echo or to that of a seal in its imprint or to the reappearance of the form of a face in a mirror. In the words of Gotama's most distinguished disciple, Buddhagosha, "As echoes, light, the impressions of a seal, and shadows have sound, etc., for their causes and exist without having come from elsewhere, just so is it with this mind." (Visuddhi-Nagya XVII.) As there is no soul substance, there can be no soul transmigration, yet is there rebirth and reincarnation; a continuance of personality beyond the dissolution of the individual in death. Favorite illustrations of the idea are the following. When a lamp is lit at a burning lamp, there is a kindling of the wick but no transmigration of the flame. When a boy learns a verse from his teacher, the verse is incarnated in the boy's mind but there is no transmigration of the verse in the proper sense of transmigration. The verse is impressed into the boy's mind but there is no material transfer.

"Where there is no transmigration, Nagasena, can there be rebirth?"

"Yes, there can."

"But how can that be? Give me an illustration."

"Suppose a man, O king, were to light a lamp

from another lamp, can it be said that the one transmigrates from, or to, the other?"

"Certainly not."

"Just so, great king, is rebirth without transmigration."

"Give me further illustration."

"Do you recollect, great king, having learnt, when you were a boy, some verse or other from your teacher?"

"Yes, I recollect that."

"Well, then, did that verse transmigrate from your teacher?"

"Certainly not."

"Just so, great king, is rebirth without transmigration." (Q. of K. M. III. 5.)

### Nirvana

The progress toward perfection issuing in permanent exemption from rebirth is marked by a number of stages and these for most believers cover more than one lifetime. The highest earthly stage, Arhatship (Sainthood), is rarely reached in the course of a single life, implying as it does *perfect* mastery of the four noble Truths and the eight-fold Path. Beyond this highest terrestrial attainment lies the supreme goal,—*Nirvana,* or *Nibbana* as it is called in Pali, though better known in its Sanskrit form, Nirvana. The word derives from the verb Nirvati, "to go out," in the sense in which a lamp goes out when no more oil remains to feed the flame. We read in the Scriptures:

"They who have steadfast mind and become exempt from evil desire and well-trained in the teaching of Gotama, are in the enjoyment of Nirvana. Their old Karma is exhausted, no new Karma is being produced; their hearts are free from the longing after a future life; the cause of their existence being destroyed and no new longing springing up within them, they, the wise, are extinguished like this lamp."

In the *Jataka* it is written:

"Wherein does Nirvana consist? And to him whose mind was already averse to passion the answer came: When the fire of lust is extinct, that is Nirvana;

When the fire of hatred and infatuation is extinct, that is Nirvana;

When pride, false belief and all other passions and torments are extinct, that is Nirvana."

Again in the *Digha Nikaya* of the Sutta-Pitaka it is said:

"He who surrenders the error of self ceases to attach himself to anything in the world, and being free from attachment he is never agitated, and being never agitated he obtains to Nirvana in his own person."

From these quotations it would seem that according to the Buddha, Nirvana did not mean annihilation but rather deathlessness. The saint lives, but does not cling; he is energetic but free from passion. As Nagasena puts it in the "Questions of King Milinda," "He that is not free from passion experi-

ences both the taste of food and also passion due to that taste, while he who is free from passion experiences the taste of food but no passion due to that taste." The Buddha was persuaded that he would pass away with all the roots of existence cut off, that Karma would have on him no more power. But whether he would live again or not he did not say, and his silence inevitably gave rise to considerable speculation on the essential nature of Nirvana. For instance, Childers and Oldenberg are of the opinion that to Gotama Nirvana meant annihilation. Max Müller contended that it described an "absolute peace of soul of which the repose of the saint is a foretaste." Rhys-Davids held that the term signifies a perfection to be attained in this life and has nothing to do with the hereafter. But Gotama gave out no positive information, describing Nirvana simply as that blessed state in which rebirth is forever impossible.

A further difficulty attaching to our understanding of Nirvana is this: When in the perfected person the operation of Karma ceases, what is there left to continue existence on? It would seem as though the Buddha had not worked out the logic of his thought to its legitimate and ultimate conclusion. Indeed Nagasena's conversation on the subject of the passing of the Buddha gives justification to this surmise.

"The king said: 'Is there such a person as the Buddha, Nagasena?'

'Yes.'

'Can he then, Nagasena, be pointed out as being here or there?'

'The Blessed One, O king, has passed away by that kind of passing away in which nothing remains which could tend to the formation of another individual. It is not possible to point out the Blessed One as being here or there.'

'Give me an illustration.'

'Now what do you think, O king? When there is a great body of fire blazing, is it possible to point out any one flame that has gone out, that it is here or there?'

'No, Sir. That flame has ceased, it has vanished.'

'Just so, great king, has the Blessed One passed away by that kind of passing away in which no root remains for the formation of another individual. The Blessed One has come to an end, and it cannot be pointed out of him, that he is here or there. But in the body of his doctrine he can, O king, be pointed out. For the doctrine was preached by the Blessed One.'" (Q. of K. M. III. 5. 10.)

Verily, is the positive content of Nirvana a vexed question, and the most we are warranted in saying is that for the Buddha, Nirvana meant a peaceful end, unmarred by any prospect of rebirth. The conflict ended, there remained only endless peace.

# CHAPTER III

## THE BIBLE OF ZOROASTRIANISM—THE AVESTA

### (a) The life and work of Zoroaster—The Gathas

FORTY centuries ago the ancestors of Gotama and of Zoroaster occupied the territory beyond the Himalayas, near the sources of the river Oxus. Not only did they live on common ground and speak a common language but they also cherished one and the same religion—the primitive Aryan religion. From this Aryan home on the table-lands of Central Asia there spread in seven successive migrations the tribes that have peopled Europe and most of Asia. Of these migrations, the two earliest were those to India in the southwest and to Persia in the southeast—the two countries witnessing a divergence of the primitive Aryan religion into Hinduism and Zoroastrianism respectively. And precisely as the warm, benignant climate and the rich fruitful soil of Western India fostered a brooding, meditative, reflective spirit, giving the religion of the country these characteristics against which Gotama registered his protests, so the less favorable conditions of life in ancient Persia (Iran) precluded philosophizing and necessitated watchfulness and courage and made industriousness the prime virtue, giving to the

religion of the country the unique emphasis which its sacred scriptures put on work and the relation of work to salvation.

Persia's place among the nations of antiquity was second only to that of Greece and Rome. So great was her power in the fifth century before our era that the late Max Müller went so far as to say that if the battles of Marathon and Salamis had been lost to Greece, Zoroastrianism, which was the state religion of the Persian empire, would have become the religion of the civilized world. In other words, if by the grace of the Persian god, Ahura-Mazda, Darius had been victorious over Alexander the Great, belief in the Olympian deities and myths would never have replaced the teachings of Zoroaster. But Persia did not go down to permanent defeat. A thousand years later she was once more in the ascendant, till the year 641, when the Mohammedan invasion established Islam where Zoroastrianism had reigned. The great majority of the faithful refused to accept the new religion and were forthwith punished with exile. They found a refuge in the northwestern part of India, now known as the presidency of Bombay. There, today, one may see the descendants of those exiles, numbering nearly 100,000 souls; a people world-renowned for their intellectual and moral worth and for the perfervid enthusiasm with which they perpetuate the religion of their fathers; a religion that has contributed several important doctrines to Christianity, through Judaism; a religion that has left its solemn record, not only in the

pages of its Sacred Book, the Avesta (Law) but also in the high-toned lives of the Zoroastrian colony at Bombay.

The Bible of the Parsees consists of six main parts:

I—The *Yasna* ("worship")—a liturgy recited by the priests at the offering to the divinities of the Zoroastrian pantheon.

II—The *Gathas* (hymns)—Chapters 28-54 of the *Yasna,* the oldest and most revered part of the sacred scriptures, consisting of metrical texts in the form of utterances of Zoroaster or of revelations of Ahura-Mazda to Zoroaster.

III—The *Vispered*—"All Lords" (of the ritual). A collection of litanies included in the "Yasna" and addressed, for the most part, to one or another of the seven archangels.

IV—The *Yashts* ("praises"). Twenty-one hymns, mostly dedicated to divinities subordinate to Ahura-Mazda.

V—The *Vendidad* (anti-demonic law). A prose ceremonial code of purification, expiation, together with moral exhortations. This book resembles somewhat the Book of "Leviticus" in the Old Testament and deals, like it, with questions of clean and unclean. These, however, refer, not to an inward spiritual state, but to external physical conditions of the body. That is unclean which is possessed of a demon and the object of purification is exorcism or expurgation of the evil spirit.

VI—*Khorda-Avesta* (shorter Avesta). A collec-

tion of prayers for private use by both laity and priests.

Very striking, in this canonical literature, is the change of atmosphere and thought into which we move when passing from the Gathas to the Yashts. Ahura-Mazda is still supreme and about him are the *Amesha-Spentas* (archangels) the *Yazatas* (angels), of whom Mithra (Lord of Truth) is chief, and the *Fravashis,* (guardian angels) all of them made objects of worship. In the Yashts, too, Zoroaster is still Prophet of the Faith, but no longer the fervid moral and religious reformer, eagerly advancing his gospel of God and duty in the face of the severest opposition; no longer is he the truly human being in his feelings of elation and discouragement as the fortunes of his ministry rise and fall; he is a purely supernatural person, discoursing with Ahura-Mazda on theological subjects. Sacrifice, rather than obedience to the moral law, is now the center of the religious life and prayer has given place to magic spells in which scrupulous care must be taken to invoke the right name of deity—so far-reaching is the contrast between the content of the Gathas and of the Yashts.

To these canonical works which constitute all that we have of the sacred Scriptures of Zoroastrianism must be added two that are included in "Sacred Books of the East."

The *Bundahish,* a work dating from the Ninth Century A.D. dealing with eschatology (the doctrine of the last things) and containing much material

from lost Avestan books. The other uncanonical work is the *Dinkard,* containing chiefly synopses of material in earlier sacred books.

From the Gathas, the earliest portion of the Zoroastrian Scriptures, we learn all that we authentically know of the person and ministry of Zoroaster. Here he is described as:

"The holy Zarathushtra—who first thought what was good, who first did what was good; who was the first Priest of the Sacred Fire, the first Warrior, the first Plougher of the ground; who first knew and first taught the word of holiness and obedience to the Word; who had a revelation of the Lord; in whose birth and growth the waters and plants rejoiced and all the creatures of the good creation cried out, Hail!" (Yasht XXIV.)

Just here a word of caution should be interjected against the popular habit of regarding Zoroastrians as "fire-worshippers." This is as serious a mistake as calling Buddhists "idol-worshippers," Hindus "sun-worshippers," or orthodox Christians "cross-worshippers." When the Hindu said, "O Savitri, thou Sun," he was not thinking of the fiery ball that rises over the Himalayas and sets behind the Indus, but rather of the Power within or behind the sun, responsible for every function it fulfills. Similarly, the Roman Catholic, when he kneels before his crucifix it is as an aid to spiritual concentration, the real object of his worship being the Christ, or God, or the Virgin Mary, as the case may be. In like manner too the Zoroastrian fire serves a symbolical

function. Well do I remember the language of the lamented Jeneghier D. Cola, (the distinguished representative of Zoroastrianism at the World's Parliament of Religions) when discussing with him the meaning of fire as a religious symbol. He said: "While our eyes are fixed on the sacred flame our hearts are humbled before Ahura-Mazda, our God."

To the Parsee, fire is the most perfect symbol of deity. Its purity, its power, its refulgence, its incorruptibility, its glory,—each of these suggests to him an attribute of deity and so he keeps the sacred flame constantly burning, as a helpful symbol, an aid in concentrating thought upon his God. The fire is scrupulously guarded from every sort of pollution and fed with carefully selected sandalwood. The priest wears a veil over his nose and mouth that his breath may not blow on the fire; his hands are encased in gauntlets and the wood is handled with tongs. Furthermore, this choice of fire as the supreme symbol of deity ilustrates the influence of environment upon religious ideas. Iran (ancient Persia) was a veritable fire-country, bespread with naphtha springs, surrounded by burning mountains, overhung with meteoric lights and stars that shone through the clear atmosphere so brilliantly as to seem articulate with spiritual meaning and suggestion.

From the Gathas we learn that Zoroaster's name was Zarathushtra, that he belonged to the Spitama clan and that the sense of his mission came to him in a succession of seven visions. Duly ordained of

Ahura-Mazda he went forth proclaiming his divine appointment as protector of herdsmen and cattle and announcing the certainty of rewards and punishments hereafter. But as in the case of Jesus, who was obliged to go from Nazareth to Capernaum before he could receive a respectful hearing, and of the Buddha who went from Kapilavastu to Benares and of Mohammed, who went from Mecca to Medina, so in the case of Zoroaster, who met with hostility from the very start, the statement was once more verified that "a prophet is not without honor, save in his own home-town." In the third of the Gathas we read:

"Whither, to what land, shall I go to escape opposition? They keep me from the noble and from the priest, while neither the traders of the land, nor the princes, please me. They follow the Druj (demon of the Lie). How shall I please thee, Ahura-Mazda?" (Yasna XLVI, 1.)

Again: in the Gathas we are told of the "call" of Zoroaster to become a moral leader, reformer and founder of a religion. One day, so the story reads, the cry of the oppressed peasants of Bactria went up to Heaven. The celestial host hearing the cry promptly held a conference at the throne of the supreme god, Ahura-Mazda. Whereupon it was voted to call Zoroaster to deliver the oppressed people. But, on receiving the divine summons, he hesitates, as Gotama and Jesus hesitated on the eve of their assuming the prophetic rôle. Finally Zoroaster accepts the call and goes forth to preach the will of

Ahura-Mazda, as against that of the false gods of the oppressors who promptly become "devils" (daevas) in the eyes of the Zoroastrians. Legendary as the account of these incidents obviously is and producing doubt in many a mind of the historicity of Zoroaster,—even as the corresponding legends of Jesus gave rise to the suspicion that no such person as he ever lived,—yet in the estimation of leading scholars is this skepticism unwarranted. Zoroaster, they hold, is, like Moses, too deeply rooted in tradition to be wholly discredited. Professor George F. Moore in his "History of Religions" declares that "no serious student any longer doubts that Zoroaster was an historical person." (p. 363.) Moreover the very legends that have grown up about him testify, as in the case of those concerning Jesus, to his spiritual greatness; for no such wonder stories as are recorded of him, are ever told of men of ordinary mould. Great personalities are trees and legends are the vines of reverence, admiration and affection that twine about them.

From the Gathas, too, we learn of the poor success that attended Zoroaster's first public preaching and of the visit of King Vishtaspa, who gave him his patronage and protection, who "broke with his weapon a path for the truth" and became the arm and support of the Zoroastrian faith, raising it to power and spreading it abroad, even as did King Asoka the Buddhist faith, both sovereigns serving as models for the portraiture of the ideal king.

The Gathas, moreover, give us a glimpse of the

social and economic conditions of the time. Zoroaster denounces unjust judges, "corrupt rulers who for gain put power into the hands of the wicked"; tyrannical princes, opponents of the true religion, testifying thus to the similarity of conditions that brought the Hebrew Prophets to the fore in the religious life of Israel.

Thus it would appear that Zoroaster did not agree with those of his compatriots who regarded penances, prayers, sacrifices and fastings as of paramount importance in religion, who thought it right to pass half the day in begging food in order that the remainder might be spent under a shady tree in undisturbed meditation and prayer. From all this he recoiled, holding that prayer should always be a means, never an end; that work is the completing of prayer, the hands fulfilling the prayer of the heart; that industry is more than meditation and settled agricultural life better than wandering, nomadic life. All who agreed with him settled down on the plains of Iran. For their encouragement and inspiration Zoroaster made known to them a great saying which he declared had been revealed to him by his God to the effect that there are four places most dear to him: where the sacred fire burns; where homes are established, with wife and children, with fire and plenty; where the most corn and fruit are raised; where dry lands are irrigated and marshy lands drained.

"O Maker of the material world, thou Holy One!

Which is the first place where the Earth ('The Genius of the Earth') feels most happy?

"Ahura-Mazda answered: 'It is the place whereon one of the faithful steps forward, O Spitama Zarathustra! with the log in his hand, (the wood for the fire altar) the Baresma in his hand (now called barsom,—a bundle of sacred twigs which the priest holds in his hand while reciting the prayers).'

"O Maker of the material world, thou Holy One! Which is the second place where the Earth feels most happy?

"Ahura-Mazda answered: 'It is the place whereon one of the faithful erects a house with a priest within, with a wife, with children, and good herds within; and wherein afterwards all cattle continue to thrive, virtue to thrive, (by the performance of worship) fodder to thrive, the wife to thrive, the fire to thrive, and every blessing of life to thrive.'

"O Maker of the material world, thou Holy One! Which is the third place where the Earth feels most happy?

"Ahura-Mazda answered: 'It is the place where one of the faithful sows most corn, grass, and fruit, O Spitama Zarathustra! where he waters ground that is dry, or drains ground that is too wet.'

"O Maker of the material world, thou Holy One! Which is the fourth place where the Earth feels most happy?

"Ahura-Mazda answered: 'It is the place where there is most increase of flocks and herds.'" (Yasna V, 15.)

What a mighty inspiration it must have been to these people who had settled on a soil that required persistent and arduous labor to make it productive and life-sustaining, to hear that the very place of their abode was most pleasing to their God!

### (b) The gospel of Zoroaster—The Vendidad, The Yasna and The Yashts

It is to the Vendidad perhaps more than to any other of the Parsee Scriptures that we must turn for the gospel of Zoroastrianism touching the dignity and sacred efficacy of work. Here, in the light of certain quotations, we see why it was that Zoroaster should have advocated industry and attached to work a sanctity all its own. Typical of his ethical message in this regard, are the following sentences from the Vendidad:

"Contend constantly against evil, strive in every way to diminish the power of evil; strive to keep pure in body and mind and so prevent the entrance of evil spirits who are always trying to gain possession of men. Cultivate the soil, drain marshes, destroy dangerous creatures. He who sows the ground with diligence acquires more religious merit than he could gain by a thousand prayers in idleness. Diligence in thy occupation is the greatest good work. To sew patch on patch is better than begging rich men for clothing. The man who has constantly contended against evil may fearlessly meet death. Death being a fact, have no fear of it, fear only not having lived

well enough. Indulge not in slothful sleep lest the work which needs to be done remains undone. The cock lifts up his voice with every splendid dawn and cries: Arise, ye men, and destroy the demon that would put back the world in sleep. Long sleeping becomes you not; arise, 'tis day; who rises first comes first to paradise! In whom does Ahura-Mazda rejoice? In him who adorns the earth with grain and grass, who dries up moist places and waters dry places. He who tills the ground is as good a servant of religion as he who offers ten thousand prayers in idleness." (Vendidad XVIII.) What a contrast between this gospel of "up and doing" and the doctrine of meditation and fasting inculcated in the *Brahmanas* which caused the Buddha to preach reform! What a contrast, too, between the optimistic aim of Zoroaster and the pessimistic aim of Gotama! Because life was a conflict with innumerable evil powers, Zoroaster did not despair of the world. He believed the good is mightier than the evil and destined ultimately to prevail. Man's salvation, he held, is not as the Buddha taught, to escape permanently from the world, but to combat evil wherever he finds it and do a man's part to conquer it. "He is a holy man who has built him a home in which are wife and children and the sacred fire. Whoso cultivates barley cultivates virtue. When the wheat appears the demons hiss, when the grain is ripe they flee in rage." (Vendidad, XVIII, 3.)

What means this reference to demons who delight in seeing men idle, who hiss when the wheat appears

and flee when the grain is ripe? It means that back of the Zoroastrian ethics of industry lay a theology without which the ethics itself would have no sanction.

Work, according to Zoroaster, is the most effective of agents for destroying the power of Angro-Mainyus, himself the ultimate source of all things evil in the world. The Zoroastrian scriptures teach that the universe is under the control of two opposing principles or powers, the one good and the other evil; the one Ahura-Mazda or Ormuzd; the other, Angro-Mainyus or Ahriman. Ahura-Mazda created a beautiful world. Then Ahriman somehow crept into the good creation and marred it by matching every beautiful thing with a counter-creation of something evil. Note that Angro-Mainyus is not introduced as a creation of Ahura-Mazda. Just who created him or whence he came, we are not told, and this holds equally true of the Hebrew Satan.

The Vendidad opens with an account of these alternating creations: "I, O Zarathushtra Spitama, made the first best place, which is Airyana Vaejah; thereupon Angro-Mainyus (the Evil Spirit) created a counter-creation, a serpent in the river, and frost made by the demons. . . . The third place which I, Ahura-Mazda, made the best was Mouru; thereupon Angro-Mainyus (the Evil Spirit) created a counter-creation, which was backbiting and lust. . . . The fifth place which I, Ahura-Mazda, made the best was Nisaya; thereupon, in opposition to it, Angro-Mainyus (the Evil Spirit), full of death, created a

counter-creation, which was the curse of unbelief. . . . As the seventh place I, who am Ahura-Mazda, created Vaekereta, . . . thereupon, in opposition to it, Angro-Mainyus (the Evil Spirit), full of death, created the evil fairy who clave to Keresaspa. . . . As the ninth place, I, who am Ahura-Mazda, created Knenenta which is the best, thereupon Angro-Mainyus (the Evil Spirit) created a counter-creation, the inexpiable deed of Sodomy."*

Thus a great cleft runs through the entire world, dividing it into two realms, the one controlled by Ahura-Mazda with his Amesha-Spentas (archangels) and Yazatas (angels); the other controlled by Angro-Mainyus, aided by his archdemons and Drujs, (demons) the entire group personified thoughts sent out from the mind of Ahura-Mazda and Angro-Mainyus respectively, for the ennobling or demoralization of the faithful.

Yet, must it be observed that this dualism is neither absolute nor eternal. Rather is it an episode in the existence of Ahura-Mazda. For He is the supreme and only God; omnipresent, omniscient; but not yet omnipotent; because, co-eval with him though not co-eternal is Angro-Mainyus. In other words, Zoroaster's dualism was temporary, for he was fundamentally a monotheist, believing, (as did Jesus) that a deliverer from all evil, a "Sasoshyant" or Messiah, would finally come and Ahura-Mazda's kingdom be all in all.

The second of the Gathas states this fundamental

* S. B. E. IV, 1 foll.

doctrine of Zoroastrianism in the Prophet's own words:

"Now will I proclaim to you who are drawing near and wish to be taught those things that pertain to Him who knows all things. And I pray that propitious results may be seen. Hear ye then with your ears, awake ye to our teaching! The primeval spirits who as a pair have been famed of old are a better and a worse as to thought, word and deed. Between these two let the wisely acting choose aright. Choose ye not as the evildoers! . . . And when the great struggle shall have been fought out then, O Mazda, the Kingdom shall have been gained for Thee! And may we be such as those who bring on this great renovation and make the world progressive till its perfection shall have been reached. And when perfection shall have been attained, then will the blow of destruction fall upon the Demon of Falsehood, but swiftest in the happy abode of Ahura, the righteous saints shall gather. Wherefore, O ye men, learn the blessings that are in store for the righteous."*

According to the ethics of Zoroastrianism, the world is a battle-field on which every human being is a soldier, fighting on the side of Ahura-Mazda with his archangels and angels, or on the side of Angro-Mainyus with his archdemons and demons. The weapons used by the good soldiers are not swords but ploughshares; not guns, but good thoughts, good words, good deeds.

* S. B. E. Vol. XXXI, pp. 28-35.

Over against the heavenly host stands the infernal host, each led by a commander-general and his aids, the object of the war being to gain possession of the souls of men, and achieve victory for the kingdom of good or of evil. True, man was created by the good spirit, Ahura-Mazda, but it was as a free moral agent that He created him. Thus man, being susceptible to evil, may range himself on the evil side of the war, or on the good, identify himself with Ahriman and his *Amesha-Spentas* or with Ormuzd and his *Daevas* and according as he chooses so will the issue be, for without man's cooperation victory remains a dream.

In Old Testament books written after the Persian domination of Judea, notably *Daniel,* we meet for the first time with names and functions of archangels, strangely reminiscent of the "Amesha-Spentas" of the Zoroastrian scriptures. Also, in the New Testament we read of guardian angels (Matt. VIII, 10, Acts XII, 15) reminding us of the "Fravashis" of the Yasna and the Yashts. Furthermore, in the Pauline Epistles, mention is made of a war against evil that extends beyond the limits of man's sinful desires and social maladjustments to cosmic warfare against "principalities and powers and the hosts of wicked spirits in the Heavens"—(Eph. VI, 12) all of which recalls Angro-Mainyus and his lieutenants, the Drujs. In his second letter to the Corinthians, Paul calls the Devil "the God of this Age of the World" (IV, 4) and in the Fourth Gospel, this archdemon is described as "the Ruler of this world"

(XII, 31) a measure of independence rivalling that of Angro-Mainyus.

But we are not to infer from these striking parallels that the Biblical authors drew directly upon Zoroastrian sources. All we are warranted in inferring from these resemblances is that Judaic and primitive Christian demonology derive, in some measure, from Zoroastrianism. We must beware of the untenable hypothesis one meets with in some of the popular literature on the subject. Thus, for example, it will not do to say with Professor G. W. Carter that the seven archangels of the Heavenly hierarchy of later Judaism were taken over outright from Zoroastrianism. For the number seven had no special significance for either Zoroastrians or Hindus, but it figured prominently in the religious ideas of the Babylonians. Therefore it would appear that the seven Amesha-Spentas of Zoroastrianism and the seven archangels of post-exilic Judaism have their *urgrund* in a Babylonian cosmology. And this conclusion would seem to have incontrovertible confirmation from Scheil's list of Mesopotamian deities, among which is Assara-Mazda (Ahura-Mazda) immediately followed by the seven Spirits of heaven, the *Igigi*.

In the twelfth Yasna is the Zoroastrian confession of faith which well illustrates the character of the religion:—

"I repudiate the Daevas. I confess myself a worshipper of Mazda, a Zarathustrian, praising and worshipping the Immortal Holy Ones, the Amesha-

Spentas. To the Wise Lord I promise all good; to Him the beneficent, righteous, glorious, venerable, I vow all the best. I abjure theft and cattle-stealing, plundering and devastating the villages of Mazda-worshippers; with due reverence I vow this to Asha (Righteousness). I renounce fellowship with the wicked, lawless, evil-doing Daevas, the most deceitful, corrupt and wicked of all; with every bad man whoever he may be, in thoughts, words and deeds and deportment.

"I pledge myself to this religion of the Mazda-worshippers which makes an end of strife and lays down weapons and promotes kindred marriages. To the wise Lord I promise all good."

Believing in the sacred efficacy of work and more especially of agricultural work as the most powerful agent for annihilating the sway of Angro-Mainyus, Zoroastrianism prohibits fasting, self-torture, excessive grief, everything calculated to ennervate the body or to reduce the power of the will.

In direct contrast to the teaching of the Brahmanas of Hinduism which made asceticism a virtue and part of a philosophy of life, the Vendidad makes it a sin, because life is never made noble and fine by wasting its opportunities, or by thwarting one's natural powers or crushing out normal desires.

"No one who does not eat has strength to do heavy work, strength to do works of husbandry, strength to beget children. By eating, every material creature lives. By not eating it dies away." (Vendidad III, 33.)

Yet heinous as were idleness and asceticism, one other sin there was, which, according to Zoroastrianism, is worse than these; nay, the deadliest sin of all —suicide; and the reason for the utter condemnation of this sin was that no one should ever allow the sacred flame of enthusiasm for the victory of the Good to die out in his heart. Nor should one be willing to reduce by even a single soldier the valiant army of warriors fighting under Ahura-Mazda for the destruction of evil and its source. The contention of Zoroastrianism is: We must stay on the earth, enlisted in the service of the good God until honorably discharged by the call of Death. No wonder a separate "Tower of Silence" was built for disposing of the dead bodies of suicides.

Three commandments were given by Zoroaster: To speak the truth, to keep one's promises and to keep out of debt.

"Break not the contract, O Spitama! neither the one that thou hadst entered into with one of the unfaithful, nor the one that thou hadst entered into with one of the faithful, who is of thine own faith."

Ahriman is the father of lies and flourishes on the falsehoods of Ormuzd's children. Their unreliability and insolvency, wherever evidenced, increase the strength of Ahriman and tend to lengthen his days. Hence the emphasis on veracity, reliability and financial solvency as virtues fraught with power to promote the victory of Ormuzd over Ahriman.

Besides these ethical agencies for promoting the triumph of the good Principle, Zoroastrianism, some-

time after the founder's death, provided an additional ceremonial agency to supplement Zoroaster's gospel of work. Among these is frequent repetition of the twenty names of Ahura-Mazda, as is indicated in the Ormuzd Yasht.*

Zarathustra asked Ahura-Mazda: "O Ahura-Mazda, most beneficent Spirit, Maker of the material world, thou Holy One!

"What of thy holy Word is the strongest, the most victorious, the most effective, the most fiend-smiting?"

Ahura-Mazda answered, "Our Name, O Spitama Zarathustra." "Then," said he, "reveal unto me that name that is the greatest, the most effective, the most fiend-smiting." And now follows the series of twenty names, closing with the plea: "If thou wantest, O Zarathustra, to destroy the malice of Daevas (evil spirits) then, recite thou these my names every day and every night."†

Concerning the hereafter, the Zoroastrian sacred scriptures give us detailed and explicit information. In the Yashts, we are told that the soul on the third night after the body's decease arrives at Chinvat (the bridge of reckoning) beyond which lies the road to Paradise. Two angels make up the soul's account, weighing the soul's good and evil deeds in "just balances" that "vary not a hair's breadth for either kings or subjects." If the good deeds outweigh the evil, the bridge is easy of passage, and the man's con-

* S. B. E. XXIII, p. 120.

† S. B. E. XXIII, p. 23.

science, in the form of a beautiful maiden, comes to meet him and conduct him to Paradise. But in the case of the wicked the bridge narrows to the width of a razor-blade and he falls off, plunging headlong into hell.

In the twenty-second Yasht, it is written: "Zarathustra asked Ahura-Mazda, 'when one of the faithful departs this life, where does his soul abide on that night?' Ahura-Mazda answered, 'It takes its seat near the head of the body, singing the Happiness-Gatha, and proclaiming happiness. On that night his soul tastes as much of pleasure as the whole of the living world can taste. At the end of the third night, when the dawn appears, it seems to the soul of the faithful one as if it were brought amid plants and scents, and it seems to him as if his own conscience were advancing to him in a wind, a sweet-scented wind in the shape of a maiden, fair, bright, strong, tall, beautiful of body, noble, as fair as the fairest thing in the world. And the soul of the faithful one addressed her, asking, 'What maid art thou?' And she, being his own conscience, answered, 'O, thou youth of good thoughts, good words and good deeds, I am thine own conscience. Everybody did love thee, for that goodness and victorious strength in which thou dost appear to me. I was lovely and thou madest me still lovelier; I was fair and thou madest me still fairer; I was desirable and thou madest me still more desirable; through thy good thought, good speech, good deeds.'" Then follows a corresponding description with regard to the fate

of the wicked, the antithesis in its details to what we have just read as to the fate of good souls. Should the good and the evil be equally balanced, the soul passes into an intermediate state of existence and its final destiny is not determined till the last judgment, when the "Saoshyant" (Messiah) will usher in the everlasting kingdom of the good.

## CHAPTER IV

## THE BIBLE OF CONFUCIANISM

### (a) The canonical "Kings"

THE sacred scriptures of the Parsees, Buddhists and Hindus are those of people identified with the Aryan branch of the human family; the sacred scriptures of Confucianists are those of a Turanian people whose chief race is the Mongolian of China, one in which the understanding has been more highly developed than the imagination and in which ethical and practical interests have always taken precedence over speculative and metaphysical matters; a race to whom order, decorum, propriety, have always meant more than meditation, prayer and religious austerities; a backward-looking race, whose reverence for the past accounts for many a characteristic of their present-day life. Education has ever been their watchword and its fundamental aim not so much learning as behavior. Hence it happens that in some respects the Chinese, as a whole, are among the most moral people in the world. So high is the standard of business ethics—inculcated in their sacred books—that a written contract is not necessary to bind a Chinese merchant. Etiquette is scrupulously observed in every walk of life and politeness, deference to elders, respect for authority, are

conspicuous traits in all classes of society. These, the acknowledged marks of the highest possible civilization, are found on a national scale in China. We of the Occident are still too apt to think of the Chinese as a barbarous, or semi-civilized people remarkable for the peculiar arrangement of their hair,* their yellow skin and slanting eyes, their opium, debauchery and dirt. We forget that China has her centers of culture and refinement as well as her slums, and that she is no more to be judged by the denizens of these degraded districts than is America by the population of the corresponding quarters in her own great cities. Let it be remembered that if China has her "coolie" cooks, her laundry folk and salmon-canners, she has also her magnificent men, of the stamp of Li Hung Chang, who immortalized himself in the American heart by his touching memorial to General Grant; men of the stamp of Minister Wu, who fairly electrified an immense audience in Carnegie Hall by his candid discussion, in a memorable address, of the relative merits of Confucianism and Christianity; men like Prince Pung Kwang Yu, author of a most scholarly and exhaustive essay on Confucianism, read at the World's Parliament of Religions; men of the caliber of the regent, Prince Ch'un, who, on behalf of the infant emperor, on the second day of December, 1908, inaugurated a new era in Chinese history, issuing a decree in his Majesty's name, requiring all

* The "queue" was forced on the Chinese by the Manchus in 1644; but in response to the modern spirit the Manchus themselves are doing away with the queue.

his subjects, on pain of extreme penalty, to assist in the gradual rehabilitation of the empire. And in this wonderful process of reorganization toward democracy we note the carefulness and caution, the far-sighted deliberation with which the work is being done, as contrasted with some of our precipitate methods, our frequent failure to "go slow round this curve" of social reform and the fond reliance of great masses of our people on one or another short-cut to a goal that can be reached only by the patient, toilsome processes of moral education.

But towering far above these celebrities whose names have been recalled, and above all other splendid types of Chinese manhood stands the supreme inspiration of the eighty or more millions who today profess Confucianism,—Kung Fu Tze, the Master Kung, or, as we have learned to call him, in the Latinized form of his name, Confucius. In striking contrast to the little we know of Zoroaster's life stands the unparalleled fulness of detail concerning the life of Confucius. Of no other great moral Leader of the East do we know so much.

One of the outstanding points of difference between the Confucian sacred scriptures and those of the other great religions is the wealth of biographical facts they furnish concerning the Founder.* Typical of the details recorded in the Confucian scriptures concerning Gotama's contemporary, the Master Kung, take the following from the tenth book of the *Lun Yu,* or "Analects":

* For a sketch of the life of Confucius, the reader is referred to my "Great Religious Teachers of the East," pp. 111-116.

"He was nice in his diet—not disliking to have his rice dressed fine, nor to have his minced meat cut small. He must have his meat cut properly, and to every kind its proper sauce; but he was not a great eater. It was only in drink that he laid down no limit to himself, but he did not allow himself to be confused by it. On occasion of a sudden clap of thunder, or a violent wind, he would change countenance. At the sight of a person in mourning, he would also change countenance, and if he happened to be in his carriage, he would bend forward with a respectful salutation. His general way in his carriage was not to turn his head round, nor talk hastily, nor point with his finger. He was charitable. When any of his friends died, if there were no relations who could be depended upon for the necessary offices, he would say, 'I will bury him.'" *

The total sacred writings of Confucianism consist of nine works, five canonical and the remaining four uncanonical. By canonical, as we have already observed, is meant that body of literature which has been officially published and prescribed as the rule of faith and practice for the adherents of a given religious organization. Those books not thus set apart are known as the uncanonical. In the canonical group are the five *Kings,* to the editing of which Confucius devoted the closing years of his life. The word "King" is significantly of textile origin, harking back to the predominant industry of China—the manufacture of silks, satins, nankeens—the very

* Chinese Classics, ed. Legge, Vol. I, p. 89.

English words, themselves, being of Chinese derivation. "Kings" connotes the warp-threads across which the woof are thrown in weaving the web. The five *Kings,* beginning with the most ancient, are:

1. The *Yi King,* "Canon of Changes,"—containing an occult interpretation of nature and human life by means of "trigrams" in sixty-four combinations to each of which a symbolical meaning is attached. The word *Yi* admits of varied interpretation. It is usually taken to mean "change." But although, so far as our sense perceptions are concerned, the universe seems to be one dim chaotic mass which gives the impression of a confusion becoming worse confounded as it continues to exert its activity, yet that is merely the appearance, not the reality. The fact is that the activity is an unceasing creative activity which does not reduce the universe into a chaos, but is constantly arranging that chaos into an orderly and comprehensive universe. Its essential factor is harmony.

2. The *Shu King,* "Canon of History,"—an historico-ethical work extolling the virtues of two ancient model kings, Yau and Shun. Semi-mythical paragons of perfection they were, who ruled twenty centuries before the time of Confucius and whose exemplary lives were, in his judgment, the root-cause of the peace and prosperity that glorified their reign. To them, he thought, all truth and virtue were to be traced and hence his mission could be none other than that of a humble "transmitter" of what he

found recorded in these ancient scriptures of his people. Accordingly he set himself the task of editing "the wisdom of the first sages," for the benefit of his contemporaries and posterity. In the *Lun Yu* is a passage indicative of the intellectual humility and sense of moral shortcomings felt by Confucius:

"The Master said 'a transmitter not an originator, believing in and loving the ancients, I venture to compare myself to our old P'ang.' "

"In the way of the superior man there are four things, to not one of which have I as yet attained.—To serve my father, as I would require my son to serve me: to this I have not attained; to serve my prince, as I would require my minister to serve me: to this I have not attained; to serve my elder brother, as I would require my younger brother to serve me: to this I have not attained; to set an example in behaving to a friend, as I would require him to behave to me: to this I have not attained."

"The Master said: 'The sage and the man of perfect virtue;—how dare I rank myself with them? It may simply be said of me, that I strive to become such without satiety, and teach others without weariness.' "

3. The *Shi King,* "Canon of Odes,"—three hundred and five in all, compiled by Confucius and introducing the reader to the whole range of Chinese lyric poetry, much of it embodying the culture of eighteen centuries before our era. Many of these compositions, like the hymns of the Rig-Veda, had been sung for centuries before they were committed to

writing, as the scripture itself testifies. Expressing his opinion of the value of these poems, Confucius said, "No man is worth speaking to who has not mastered the poems of an anthology, the perusal of which elevates the mind and purifies it from all corrupt thoughts." The Confucian Association of Peking has adopted as its Prayer the following sacrificial Ode of the Chow Dynasty (115-1079 B.C.) as edited by Confucius in the *Shi King:*

Oh, Revere! Oh, Revere!
God is glorious.
His decree is not easily preserved.
Don't say that He is high aloft above us;
He ascends and descends about our doings;
And daily inspects us wherever we are.
As I am His little child,
I don't know how to revere my resting place.
But by daily accomplishment and monthly progress,
My learning may continue the light toward His brightness
Help me to bear this burden on my shoulders,
And show me the glorious virtue and conduct.

From the metrical translation of the *Shi King* by the eminent Chinese scholar, James Legge, the following two specimen ethical Odes are taken:

AGAINST FRIVOLOUS PURSUITS

Like splendid robes appear the wings
  Of the ephemeral fly;
And such the pomp of those great men,
  Which soon in death shall lie!
I grieve! Would they but come to me!
  To teach them I should try.

The wings of the ephemeral fly
  Are robes of colors gay;
And such the glory of those men,
  Soon crumbling to decay!
I grieve! Would they but rest with me,
  They'd learn a better way!

The ephemeral fly bursts from its hole,
  With gauzy wings like snow;
So quick the rise, so quick the fall,
  Of those great men we know!
I grieve! Would they but lodge with me,
  Forth they would wiser go.

### Moral Lessons From Natural Facts

All true words fly, as from yon reedy marsh
The crane rings o'er the wild its screaming harsh.
Vainly you try reason in chains to keep;—
Freely it moves as fish sweep through the deep.
Hate follows love, as 'neath those sandal-trees
The withered leaves the eager searcher sees.
The hurtful ne'er without some good was born;—
The stones that mar the hill will grind the corn.

All true words spread, as from the marsh's eye
The crane's sonorous note ascends the sky.
Goodness throughout the widest sphere abides,
As fish 'round isle and through the ocean glides.
And lesser good near greater you shall see,
As grows the paper shrub 'neath sandal-tree.
And good emerges from what man condemns;—
Those stones that mar the hill will polish gems.

4. The *Li Ki King,* "Canon of Rites,"—inspired by an inner law of control and balance—a book that takes us into the very heart of Chinese society as it

already was, centuries before Confucius. This work has its analogue in the *"Chou Li,"* written at a much later day and dealing with the ceremonial for *public* life, a book of which the late Professor Hirth, of Columbia University, said: "As an educator of the nation the *Chou Li* is unparalleled in the literature of the world." It behooves us, however, to beware of popular misconception of the book. For fundamentally, it is concerned with an inner state of harmony and restraint of which the external act is a symbol. Given that state, a man's outward conduct cannot be other than harmonious and restrained. It is in the *Li Ki King* (Book VII) that we meet with the doctrine of universalism or the world-republic.

"When the great principle of universalism prevails, the whole world becomes a republic; the people elect men of virtue, talent, and ability; they talk about true agreement and cultivate universal harmony. Thus men do not regard as their parents only their own parents, nor treat as their children only their own children. Provision is provided for the aged till their death, employment given to the middle-aged, and the means of self-development offered to the young. Widowers, widows, orphans, childless people and those who are disabled by disease, are all supported by the state. Each man has his rights, and each woman her individuality safeguarded. They produce wealth, disliking that it would be thrown away upon the ground, but not wishing to keep it for their own gratification. Dis-

liking idleness, they labor but not alone with a view to their own advantage. In this way, selfish schemings are repressed and they find no way to arise. Robbers, filchers and the rebellious do not exist. Hence the outer doors can remain open. This is what I call universalism."

"Talking about true agreement and cultivating universal harmony are called advantages of men.

"Fighting, plundering, and killing each other, are called the calamities of men."

5. *Ch'un Ts'in,* "Spring and Autumn" (Annals of Lu, [700-550 B.C.,] the principality in which Confucius was born),—mainly the work of Confucius himself and containing the eight fundamental principles of universal peace as he conceived them.

1. Heaven is the Lord of the universe, and loves all creatures. 2. Universal Love of Mankind, irrespective of racial differences. 3. The distinction between the civilized countries and barbarian states is not on the basis of racial differences, nor of geographical situations, but on the basis of possessing propriety and justice. 4. Reciprocity is the fundamental principle for international relations. That is, "What you do not want done to yourself, do not do to others." 5. Truthfulness is the real binding force of international relations. Without truthfulness the world will go asunder. 6. War cannot be justified because all nations standing on equal footing have no right to make war against each other. 7. There are divisions of territories, but not of people, as all people belong to one family. 8. The whole world

is a great unity, disregarding national strength and geographical advantages of locations.

In the course of the centuries following the death of Confucius, these *Kings* underwent vicissitudes unmatched in the history of the transmission of sacred texts. After the death of Confucius, disputes arose as to the authenticity of the text, owing to the appearance of various editions; then incendiarism, actuated by the desire to keep the people in ignorance, destroyed the sacred literature of the nation; then, in the second century before our era, a successful attempt at remedying the grievous loss was made by an edict commanding all loyal Chinese to assist in the work of restoration, a commission having been appointed to superintend the work of collecting and editing all that could be recovered. And it is from the first century prior to our era that these Chinese "Classics," as we now have them, date.

### (b) The uncanonical "Four Books"

Four *un*canonical "Books" constitute part of the sacred scripture of Confucianism. Though written after the Founder's death by disciples, immediate and remote, they yet furnish us with a complete compendium of his ethical ideas. Not the least remarkable fact about these "Books" is that, without any claim of infallibility or of Divine inspiration being made for them, they have, in the estimation of Confucianists, the selfsame sanctity and authority attaching to them that we find in the scriptures of other religions. First of the Four "Books" is the

I. *Lun-Yu,* "Analects" or "Table-Talk,"—a collection of twenty books setting forth the essential teachings of Confucius, more especially with reference to filial piety, which the Master conceived as the foundation, not only of family life, but also of that larger family life represented by the State. Obedience to the State he enjoined as no less imperative than the obedience of children to their parents. Let the following quotations suffice to indicate the general character of the contents of the *Lun-Yu:*

"To learn and then to practice opportunely what one has learned, does not this bring with it a cause of satisfaction? The true philosopher devotes himself to what is fundamental; for when that has been established, right courses naturally evolve. And are not filial devotion and respect for elders the very foundation of an unselfish life? Let young people show filial piety at home, respectfulness toward their elders when away from home; let them be circumspect, truthful; their love going out freely to all, cultivating goodwill to men.

"Give prominent place to loyalty and sincerity. Have no associates in study who are not advanced somewhat like yourself. When a youth is at home, let him be filial; when abroad, respectful to his elders. And while exhibiting a comprehensive love for all men, let him ally himself with the good. When you have erred be not afraid to correct yourself." (Book I.)

"If a man of honor forsake virtue, how is he to

fulfil the obligations of his name! A man of honor never disregards virtue, even for the space of a single meal. In moments of haste he cleaves to it; in seasons of peril he cleaves to it. One should not be greatly concerned at not being in office; but rather about the requirements of oneself for such a standing. Neither should one be so much concerned at being unknown; but rather with seeking to become worthy of being known. When you meet with men of worth, think how you may attain to their level; when you see others of an opposite character, look within, examine yourself." (Book IV.)

"The man who practises the principle of love, wishing to establish himself, seeks also to establish others; wishing to develop himself, he seeks also to develop others.

"To be able to take one's inmost self for judging others, may be called the art of applying the principle of love." (Book VI.)

"Tse-Kung put to the Master the question, 'Is there one word upon which the whole of life may proceed?' The Master replied, 'Is not Reciprocity such a word? What you do not yourself desire, do not put before others.' Not to retract after committing an error may itself be called an error. In serving your prince, make your service the serious concern and let salary be a secondary matter. In speaking, perspicacity is all that is needed." (Book XV.)

"Three things a superior man should guard against: against the lusts of the flesh in his earlier

years, while the vital powers are not fully developed and fixed; against the spirit of combativeness when he has come to the age of robust manhood and when the vital powers are matured and strong; and against ambitiousness when old age has come on and vital powers have become weak and decayed.

"Three things also such a man reveres greatly: the ordinances of Heaven, great men, and the words of sages. Nine things there are of which the superior man should be mindful: to be clear in vision, quick in hearing, genial in expression, respectful in demeanor, true in word, serious in duty, inquiring in doubt, firmly self-controlled in anger, just and fair when the way to success opens out before him." (Book XVI.)

"Tzu Chang asked Confucius the meaning of virtue, to which Confucius replied: 'To be able everywhere one goes to carry five things into practice, constitutes virtue. . . . They are respect, magnanimity, sincerity, earnestness, and kindness. With respect, you will avoid insult. With magnanimity, you will win all. With sincerity, men will trust you. With earnestness, you will have success. And with kindness, you will be fitted to command others.'" (Book XVII.)

II. *Ta-Hio,* "The Great Learning,"—a treatise on self-culture and its relation to social ethics, society being conceived as an extension of the individual. Typical of its contents is this significant passage:

"The illustrious ancients, when they wished to make clear and propagate the highest virtues, first

put their states in proper order. Before putting their states in proper order, they regulated their families. Before regulating their families, they cultivated their own selves. Before cultivating their own selves, they perfected their own souls. Before perfecting their own souls, they tried to be sincere in their thoughts. Before trying to be sincere in their thoughts, they extended to the utmost their knowledge. Such extension of knowledge lay in the investigation of things and in seeing them as they really were. When things were thus investigated, knowledge became sincere. When thoughts were sincere, their souls became perfect. When their souls were perfect, their own selves became cultivated. When their selves were cultivated, their families became regulated. When their families were regulated, their state came to be orderly. When their states were in proper order, then the whole world became peaceful and happy." In other words, the harmonious and orderly conditions of society are the result of the extension of the personal virtues.

It is here also in the Ta-Hio that we find the most comprehensive interpretation of *chün-tse, i.e.,* one who has cultivated all the fundamental instincts to their utmost limit and yet maintains a balance and harmony among them—the instinct for knowledge, for moral elevation, for beauty, for social manners. As against the Pauline doctrine of the *suppression* of natural desires, Confucius pleaded for their proper control. Like Plato he believed the ideal man to be one in whom all instincts, impulses, proclivities,

function in an organized life, man's business being to organize it, not in enmity to any one of these but with due regard for all. In the words of this scripture:

"The cultivation of our moral life consists in the maintenance of a complete balance of our being. When we are infested with passions, then that balance or equilibrium is lost. So also when we have fear, when we are particularly attracted to some object which has for us an unusually strong appeal, when we are overcome with grief. Under these circumstances our mind wanders away from the objects which should occupy our attention. We look but see not, we hear but comprehend not, we eat but taste not." Hence moderation as taught by Confucius is decorum in the good old eighteenth century sense,—a process of harmonization, that being the goal of the conduct of life. This has been given expression in the following paragraph: "When the passions such as joy, anger, grief, and pleasure have not awakened, that is when we have true moral being. When these passions awaken and each and all attain due measure and degree, that is complete harmonization, and therefore a perfect moral order. Our moral being is the great reality of universal existence, our harmonized moral order is the eternal law of the universe."

III. *Chung-Yung,* "The Doctrine of the Mean," expounding the Master's dominant conception of the middle path between extremes and emphasizing what for him was a "cosmic principle,"—equilib-

rium, or balance. Here, as in the Analects, we meet with the Golden Rule but its significance for Confucius seems to have been different from what it was for Jesus. And the distinction is of capital importance because it is commonly believed that the Golden Rule enunciated by Jesus was not original with him but substantially that enunciated by Confucius. On closer inspection, however, it appears that the two Golden Rules are only verbally alike, not substantially the same. What Jesus intended to convey is not that which Confucius had in mind. As put forth by the Chinese sage, the rule seems to say: "Keep the balance true between thyself and thy neighbor, practise the principle of equilibrium." Whereas, according to Jesus, the rule means, "Look upon thy neighbor as thy other self; act toward him as if thou wert he." Perhaps a like differentiation could be established in the case of the other five variants of the Golden Rule, presented in the introductory chapter; nevertheless it is plain that the fundamental spiritual attitude implied in the various statements is the same.[1] For, I take it that the Golden Rule, strictly speaking, is not a rule at all. It does not tell us specifically what to do, but simply indicates the spirit that should control and underlie our action, leaving it to us to find the appropriate deed.

It is generally conceded that the *Chung-Yung* is the most important of all the four "Books" in that

[1] P. xvi.

its cardinal ideas are presented more systematically and logically than in any other Confucian text.

*Chung* means what is central and *Yung* what is common to humanity, or universal, thus bringing home to us a distinctive feature of Confucius' message, by his linking of Man with the larger microcosm, *lebensphilosophie* with *naturphilosophie*. Thus, for example, in the opening sentences of this third of the four "Books" we read:

"The ordinance of God is what we call the law of our being. To fulfil the law of our being is what we call the moral law. . . . The moral law is a law from whose operation we cannot for one instant in our existence escape. A law from which we may escape is not the moral law." Further on we read: "To find the central clue to our moral being which unites us to the universal order, that indeed is the highest human attainment. People are seldom capable of it for long."

In Chapter XXIX it is stated that: "Confucius taught the truth originally handed down by the ancient Emperors Yao and Shun, and he adopted and perfected the system of moral laws established by the Emperors Wen and Wu. He showed that they harmonize with the divine order which governs the revolutions of the seasons in the Heaven above, and that they fit in with the moral design which is to be seen in physical nature upon the earth below. These moral laws form one system with the laws by which Heaven and Earth support and contain, overshadow and canopy all things. These moral laws

form the same system with the laws by which the seasons succeed each other and the sun and moon appear with the alternations of day and night . . . one system running through all—that makes the universe so impressively great."

Surely, then, in so far as religion consists in the sense of humility before a divine order, or in recognition of a unity in the relationship between the human and the cosmic world, Confucianism is entitled to be call a religion as well as the other great systems of the world. The story goes that Confucius when visiting the tomb of Hwang Ti, the Yellow Emperor, noticed three buckets hanging in a triply divided frame. The hinges of the vessels were low and Confucius, who derived moral lessons from all things he saw, improved the opportunity and delivered to his disciples a parable on moderation. When one of the buckets was filled with water high above the hinges, it would become unsteady and tip, spilling almost all its contents. "Thus," said Confucius, "is the man without moderation. He will not be able to practise self-control." The parable is told in Book II: "Kung-tze visited the shrine of Prince Kwan of (the State of) Lu, where he found some tipping (or inclined) vessels. The Master asked the guard of the shrine, saying: 'What are these vessels?' The guard replied: 'They are Yu Tso's vessels.' Kung-tze said: 'I heard of Yu Tso's vessels: when they are empty, they tip; when half filled, they stand upright; when quite filled, they are upset. The enlightened Prince found in this a

great moral teaching; he had these vessels always beside his seat.'"

IV. *Mong-Tzi,* "Mencius, the Philosopher." He lived from 372 to 289 B.C. and was the foremost champion of Confucian teaching in his day, going from city to city in the customary way, expounding to government officials the principles upon which the prosperity of states depends and setting forth to lay individuals the ethics of personal life. With exceptional skill Mencius made use of the dialogue form, reminding the reader of Socrates. The "Book" of precepts and discussions that bears his name resembles the *Lun-Yu* in its doctrine of "equilibrium" and "harmony," only its concern is chiefly with their application to government. This is exemplified in the following typical quotation:

"If the people have not a certain livelihood, they will not have a fixed heart. And if they have not a fixed heart, there is nothing which they will not do in the way of self-abandonment, of moral deflection, of depravity, and of wild license. When they thus have been involved in crime, to follow them up and punish them—this is to entrap the people. Therefore an intelligent ruler will regulate the livelihood of the people, so as to make sure that, above, they have sufficient wherewith to serve their parents, and, below, sufficient wherewith to support their wives and children; that in good years they shall always be abundantly satisfied, and that in bad years they shall escape the danger of perishing. After this he may urge them, and they will proceed to do what

is good, for in this case the people will follow after that with ease." In the interests of a lost harmony Mencius sanctioned the right of revolution:

"If a prince have grave faults the nobles and ministers who are of his blood ought to remonstrate with him, and if he do not listen to them after they have done so again and again, they ought to dethrone him." (Book I.)

"If every man would love his parents and show due respect to his elders, the whole world would enjoy peace." (Book IV.)

### (c) Cardinal Conceptions in the Confucian Religion

#### (1) *The Chief End of Man*

Our study of the sacred scriptures of the three great Aryan religions has shown us how differently they answer that most vital of ethical questions, the one with which the old Presbyterian catechism began,—"What is the chief end of man?" The Upanishads,—the highwater mark of ancient Hindu religio-philosophical thought—make answer: to realize the essential oneness of the finite soul (atman) with the Soul of the universe (Atman), *"twam twat asi"* (*That* art *Thou*), culminating in reunion with Brahma. According to the Pitakas of Buddhism the chief end of man is to attain the enlightenment that points the way to escape from *Maya,* illusion, and prepare for entrance into Nirvana, that state in which there is no more rebirth. The Avesta of Zoroastrianism answers the question in terms of the

age-long struggle between the powers of Light and the powers of Darkness, led by Ahura-Mazda and Angro-Mainyus, respectively. The chief end of man is to be a soldier, fighting on the side of Ahura-Mazda, his Archangels and Angels against Angro-Mainyus, his Archdemons and Demons,—and the weapons to be used are not swords, but ploughshares; not guns, but "good thoughts, good words, good deeds."

Turning, now, to the answer given in the Four Books of Confucianism we have to note that it has nothing whatever in common with the preceding answers. The Presbyterian injunction, "to glorify God and enjoy Him forever," would have been an end altogether too metaphysical and mystical to satisfy Confucius. To stop the process of reincarnation, whether by the Hindu, or by the Buddhistic method, was an end wholly foreign to the order of ideas on which Confucius had been brought up. Zoroaster's answer,—to coöperate with Ahura-Mazda, the primeval good-principle in the struggle for victory over Angro-Mainyus, the source and sustainer of all evil—this, too, was an end altogether alien to the mind of Confucius. Having for his prime and ever-present purpose, the perfecting of the relations that exist between man and man, his answer would have been expressed in terms of that all-absorbing problem. To him the chief end of man was to become a desirable member of society, and the main function of Confucius as a great moral leader lay in pointing the way to the attainment of

this end. He directed attention to the word "reciprocity" as that "on which the whole of life may proceed," adding, "What you do not wish done to yourself do not unto others." He enjoined upon each individual, whatever his calling or his position in society, the practice of "the five cardinal virtues": justice, temperance, generosity, humility, propriety (a sense of the fitness of things). He divided the possible relations of man into five groups, attaching to each specific duties and defined "the superior man" as one who recognized these relations and fulfilled the duties of such of the five as came into the realm of his experience. Sovereign and subject, husband and wife, parent and child, older and younger brothers and sisters, friend and friend. As typifying the duties identified with each of these five relations he bade sovereigns be benevolent and subjects loyal, husbands devoted and wives affectionate, parents wise and children obedient, older brothers and sisters considerate of younger and the younger deferential toward the older, friend faithful to friend.

Given the fulfillment of these various duties, scrupulous observance of all the rules which Confucius had prepared for the different departments of life, and there would ensue of necessity, he believed, that regulation of the individual, the family and the state which guarantees to the whole nation "the three greatest blessings,—material prosperity, learning and virtue." Yea, there would be seen again in society, what glorified the kingdoms of Yao and Shun—a reproduction in human life of the serene, harmoni-

ous order visible in the solar system and in the regular operations of Nature. Only through these, Confucius held, does "Heaven" speak. That order in Nature provides man with a pattern of moral conduct. Man, he believed, has no higher lesson to learn than that taught him by Nature, viz., to reproduce in his own personal life and in society an order as calm and unbroken and harmonious as is hers.

As it is written in the Analects:

"Strive to accord your dispositions to Nature; so shall you be seeking great happiness. The four seasons pursue their courses and all things are continually being produced in order. Equilibrium is the root from which harmony springs. Harmony is the universal path which all should pursue. Let the states of harmony and equilibrium exist in perfection and a happy order will prevail and all things flourish."

### (2) *Belief in God*

Confucianism is frequently described as "atheistic" but the sacred scriptures of the religion give no warrant for the allegation. It is true that, in expressing himself concerning belief in God, Confucius was exceedingly reserved. He "preferred not to speak" on the subject and seems to have had an innate agnostic attitude toward things supersensible. We read in "The Great Learning": "Among the subjects on which the Master did not speak were spiritual beings and miraculous things." Unlike Gotama—who was an atheist in the sense that he "left vacant

the place above the finite gods," denying the existence of a supreme permanent Reality (Brahma) and believing that all things and beings exist only in "a state of flux,"—Confucius recognized a Power higher than man and related to man. But knowing nothing of that Power he preferred to be silent on the subject. Plenty of passages there are in his own "Ch'un-ts'iu-King" and in the "Four Books" to prove him a deeply religious man, conscious of dependence on an inscrutable Power. But being inscrutable, Confucius invariably used the cosmic term "Tien" (Heaven) in preference to the anthropomorphic term "Shang-Ti" (Highest Lord). It is related that when imprisoned in the city of Ku'ang with a group of disciples and it seemed to them that release would be indefinitely postponed, Confucius reminded them that "Heaven protects the culture" which he and they represent. "What harm can come to those protected by Heaven?" On another occasion, when threatened with assassination and his disciples urged him to flee, the Master said, "Heaven has endowed me with virtues, what have I to fear from oppressors?" On another occasion he said, "Alas! there is no one that knows me." Tsze-Kung said, "What do you mean by thus saying that no one knows you?" He replied, "I do not murmur against Heaven. I do not grumble against men. My studies lie low, and my penetration rises high. But there is Heaven,—*That* knows me!"

Such scriptural passages as these make clear the non-atheistical character of the Confucian religion

and testify to the essentially deep religious nature of the Founder. And this is substantiated further by what we read in the Shu-King and in the Li-Ki-King with reference to the worship of "spirits" subordinate to "Tien" or "Shang-Ti."

For centuries prior to the birth of Confucius, there obtained in China belief in a hierarchy of Nature—Spirits corresponding to the political organization of the country and this belief was carried over from the ancient Chinese religion into Confucianism. Just as the various officials of the empire stand under the emperor, so under the heaven-spirit, highest lord, "Shang-Ti," there exist the spirits of the sun, the moon, the stars, the rivers, the forests, etc., together with the ancestral spirits of families, ranked according to the social status of the people. There being such a hierarchy of spirits, it follows that all persons cannot be permitted to worship these spirits indiscriminately. Only the Emperor can worship Heaven. Only governors of provinces can worship the spirits of mountains and rivers. Only magistrates and officials below the governor can worship the minor orders of spirits. The common people can worship only the spirits of their ancestors and are required to do so. Hence in every Confucian home there is a "hall of the ancestors" where tablets are placed bearing the names of the ancestors, father and mother conducting the ceremony. This consists of praises to the spirits of the ancestors and the offering of flowers, followed by a family meal to which the spirits are invited and at which they are

represented by one of the boys of the family, dressed in his dead grandfather's clothes, to symbolize the presence of the ancestral spirits. The Emperor, no less than the common people, is required to worship the spirits of his ancestors and the supreme semi-annual festival is that in honor of the royal ancestors, conducted by the Emperor himself, assisted by the chief dignitaries of the realm. At the common meal one of the imperial grandsons, duly robed in an ancestral royal gown, represents the spirits of ancestral royalty.

To this "spring and autumn festival" must be added the annual ceremony in commemoration of Confucius, celebrated in the red-walled temple of Confucius at Pekin and conducted (until the end of the old regime) by the Emperor. Before the tablet of the Master he utters the following invocation: "Great art thou, O perfect Sage. Thy virtue is full, thy doctrine complete. Among mortal men there has not been thy equal. All Kings honor thee. Thou art our pattern. Reverently have the sacrificial vessels been set out. Full of awe we sound our drums and bells."

### (3) *A State-Religion*

Confucianism is a state-religion of the most pronounced and thorough-going type. It employs civic officials where other religions hire priests and acknowledges in these officials no supernatural power or meditorial functions, but solely that of conducting the commemorative exercises. It is a reli-

gion without theology, church, or priesthood; a religion so identified with the national government as on the one hand to have given it its unrivalled, unsurpassed persistence through five thousand years, and on the other hand to have denied it that sense of touch with what is infinitely holy and sublime together with the sense of a potential divineness in every human soul without which no religion can ever permanently satisfy.

### (4) *Immortality*

With regard to belief in a future life, Confucianism takes the same agnostic position observed in its attitude to theism. This is strikingly exemplified in the following passages from the Analects.

"Chi-Lu asked about serving the spirits of the dead, and the Master said, 'While you are not able to serve men, how can you serve their spirits?' The disciple added, 'I venture to ask about death' and he was answered, 'While you do not know life, how can you know about death?' " Still more striking is a conversation with another disciple, recorded in the "Narratives of the School."

"Tsze-Kung asked him, saying, 'Do the dead have knowledge (of our services, that is), or are they without knowledge?' The Master replied, 'If I were to say that the dead have such knowledge, I am afraid that filial sons and dutiful grandsons would injure their substance in paying the last offices to the departed; and if I were to say that the dead have not such knowledge, I am afraid lest unfilial sons should

leave their parents unburied. You need not wish, Tsze, to know whether the dead have knowledge or not. There is no present urgency about the point. Hereafter you will know it for yourself.' "*

But being a practical people, it is not unusual to find Confucianists, when confronted with business or domestic misfortune, or with death, employing Taoist or Buddhist priests to bring their magical auguries to bear on the crisis, or to chant their requiems for the departed, as the case may be. In other words, not being certain of what comes after death, and their own religion providing no ceremonial related to the soul's future welfare, they find it practicable and desirable to resort to religions that make a specialty of securing eternal bliss in the world to come. Commendable as such eclecticism may be, it none the less betrays a fatal defect in the Master's religion and the probability of a neo-Confucianism rising in China, equal to meeting a spiritual need which no one of the three ruling religions of China supplies to the satisfaction of the best elements of the nation.

As the Hindu Upanishads reveal a religion of the spirit stressing the essential oneness of man's spirit with the Universal Spirit; as the Buddhist Pitakas unfold a religion of the heart, emphasizing the supreme importance of a self-renouncing love and sympathy for all who remain under the spell of Maya (illusion); as the Zoroastrian Avesta sets forth a religion of the hand, laying stress on work as the

* Trans.: Legge, Opus Cit., p. 95.

chief purifying and saving agency in the conflict between the good and evil principles of the world; so the Confucian Four Books expound a religion of the head, intellectual mastery of the moral teachings of the Founder being the surest guarantee of an ideal social order. For Confucius firmly believed that if people would but reverently memorize and master these precepts, the intellectual task would so react on the will as to produce the moral life. People, he used to say, are just like water which takes exactly the shape of the dish into which it is poured. Such a dish he saw in his system of rules and if only the people could be, as it were, poured into the dish, the desired moral result would ensue. But alas, between knowing what is right and doing it, there lies *love* of the right and the *will* to do it. And until the affections and the will are more fully reckoned with and duly trained, the Confucian plan must remain but partially complete. So far did he go in his reliance on rules as to advocate the assuming of certain physical postures expressive of moral qualities—such as humility, reverence, obedience—believing that the very soul of the individual would become informed with these graces of character of which the postures were the external signs. Whatever degree of value is to be attached to such intellectual and physical self-discipline as Confucius enjoined, it will be conceded that this faith of his in the efficacy of rules and attitudes to achieve the desired moral end, this method of working from the circumference to the center, coupled with the influence of ancestor wor-

ship, explains in large measure that age-long arrested development of China to which she has recently awakened and from which she is steadily freeing herself. And yet, after all, the supreme reliance of Confucius, as we have seen, was not on rules alone, nor on rules plus biographies of great souls, but on the power of personal example. This he held superior to every other known reformatory agent. Such having been his conviction, it should be noted further that the lifting power of his example was due, not so much to his exalted character and great learning, as to his striving for an ideal of virtue and of scholarship which he felt he had not yet attained. Others, seeing that striving, were moved to a like endeavor. So is it ever with the truly great teacher. Not his intellectual or moral attainments, but his spiritual passion to possess more of infinite truth and right, this it is that determines his lifting power over other lives. So was it with Confucius. His greatest work of art was not his edition of the "Kings" nor the composition of the "Spring and Autumn Annals"; it was the life in which he practised the precepts taught in the books.

# CHAPTER V

## AN OLDER CONTEMPORARY OF CONFUCIUS AND HIS BOOK

### (Lao-Tze and the *Tao-Teh-King*)

THE only native Chinese religion that ever competed with Confucianism for the religious control of China was Taoism. Its founder was Lao-Tze (the old Philosopher). Born in 604 B.C., he was some fifty years the senior of Confucius. Tradition has it that on one occasion Confucius visited the state capitol at Loh-Yang, to consult the archives of which Lao-Tze was the custodian and the venerable sage took occasion to inform him that his ideas were erroneous and his reform-method futile, adding that it would be well to discard his artificial dignity and ceremonial manner, because when a man has real modesty and humility he does not seek to give them external expression. It may well be, as most authorities agree, that this story is apocryphal, yet is it *ben trovato* because it expresses so well the bewilderment Confucius must have experienced when he made his first acquaintance with teachings so diametrically opposed to his own. Furthermore, the story points to the irreconcilability of the two systems of thought and it persists to this day. Neither the adherents of Confucianism nor those of Taoism have

succeeded in effecting a conciliation or higher harmony inclusive of their differences. Lao-Tze's views were embodied in a book he entitled *"Tao-Teh,"* "Reason and Virtue." Its profound ennobling principles and precepts caused it to be raised by imperial decree to the level of *canonical* authoritative literature, the ultimate source of information on Taoist faith and practice. Hence the addition of the term *King* (canon) to the original title of the book. It consists of two main parts, called *Tao* and *Teh,* the whole subsequently divided by expositors into eighty short chapters, or sections. The first portion is chiefly metaphysical, the second, ethical and poetical, though no logical development of ideas binds the two parts. So striking is the resemblance between certain portions of the second book and what we find in the New Testament, as to have given rise to the hypothesis of Christian influence on the thought of the Chinese author. But the pre-Christian origin of this canonical work has been established beyond all question through the discovery of the greater part of the contents in quotations made by Chinese writers who flourished long before the beginning of the Christian era.[1] So laconic and terse is the style in which the *Tao-Teh-King* is written that it makes the book obscure and the sense of its obscurity is considerably aggravated by the many different meanings that attach to the term *Tao.* It means "way," or "method," *i.e.,* "according to a way." It is some-

[1] See "The Monist," vol. XI, pp. 574 foll., for further details on this point.

times translated "principle," "word," the latter corresponding to the "logos" of the Fourth Gospel. "In the beginning was the Word" (Logos). Again, *Tao* is a term for "the nameless." "The name that can be named is not the unchanging enduring name Tao." *Tao* is the Ultimate, Eternal Reason; Heaven's Reason (T'ien-Tao), spelled with a capital R to differentiate it from the reason of the rationalist, the fallible reason of man. Bodiless, omnipresent, prior even to God (Shang-Ti) it is that which, in its essence, is unknowable; as source of all being it is itself beyond being; the *Ur-Grund* of all that is. Typical passages from the first book of the Tao-Teh-King, setting forth what is meant by the Tao, are the following:

"The Tao (way) that can be trodden is not the enduring and unchanging Tao. The name (Tao) that is named is not the enduring and unchanging name.

"Before the Most High Lord (Shang-Ti), is a first principle (the ἀρχή of the Greek philosophers), which in its essential being is unknowable. As source of all being, *ratio essendi,* it is itself beyond being: "All existences in the universe sprang from Being (Tao, as active); Being itself sprang from Non-Being (Tao, as absolute)." It produces and nourishes all things, "by its outflowing operation," and to it, as to their origin, all things, when they have run their course, return. It is the end as well as the beginning of all existences. "We look at it and do not see it, and we name it 'the Equable'; we

listen to it and do not hear it, and we name it 'the Inaudible'; we try to grasp it and do not get hold of it, and we name it 'the Subtle.' With these three qualities it cannot be made the subject of any descriptions; and hence we blend them together and obtain the One." In the twenty-fifth chapter of the Tao-Teh-King is the following passage which comes nearer than any other to a definition of the Tao:—

"There was a Something, undifferentiated and yet perfect, before heaven and earth came into being. So still, so incorporeal! It alone abides and changes not. It pervades all, but is not endangered. It may be regarded as the mother of all things. I know not its name; if I must designate it, I call it Tao. Striving to give it a name, I call it great; I call it transcending; transcending, I call it far off; far off, I call it returning. . . . Man takes his norm from earth; earth from heaven; heaven from Tao; the Tao from itself."

What impressed Lao-Tze above all else in the orderly operations of Nature was their effortlessness. "The Tao does everything without doing anything. It is Heaven's way not to strive, yet it overcomes." And this method of Nature's is the norm for man. His chief end is to take example of the Tao, pattern his life after it, make it "the inner law of his life from which good conduct spontaneously flows." By so doing the *cosmic* principle becomes in him *ethical* principle. Herein lies the basis of Taoist ethics and to this the second part of the Tao-Teh-King is devoted. The Tao as manifested in man is the *jan-Tao*

virtue-acting power, operating to will and to do the transcendent divine will of the *T'ien Tao.* In every human being, according to Lao-Tze, is this *jan-Tao,* this divine spirit which has its counterpart in the external world as the basis of Nature's order and harmony and in devotion to which "the incomplete achieves completion and the ideal of perfection realization." This is the corner-stone of Taoist ethics. To let Heaven's Reason prevail, to yield oneself to the holy prompting of the Tao, never interfering with Nature's way of seeking to alter the order of things, but instead "acting non-assertion," practising self-surrender to the Tao, that makes one "master," "superior," "holy"; that enables a man "to do without ado"; to act without acting,—devoid of display, egotism, vanity;—to act with non-assertion (*wei wu wei*) to find "in quietness and confidence his strength."

Typical passages from the *Teh,*—the second part of the sacred book,—inculcating the kind of ethical living which allegiance to the *Tao* calls for, are the following:

"When merit has been achieved, do not take it to yourself. On the other hand, if you do not take it to yourself, it shall never be taken from you.

"By many words wit is exhausted. It is better to preserve a mean.

"Keep behind and you shall be put in front. Keep out, and you shall be kept in.

"What the world reverences may not be treated with irreverence.

"Good words shall gain you honor in the marketplace. Good deeds shall gain you friends among men.

"He who, conscious of being strong, is content to be weak, he shall be a cynosure of men.

"The Empire is a divine trust, and may not be ruled. He who rules, ruins. He who holds by force, loses.

"Mighty is he who conquers himself.

"He who is content has enough.

"The wise man's freedom from grievance is because he will not regard grievances as such.

"The good I meet with goodness; the bad I also meet with goodness. . . . The faithful I meet with faith, the faithless I also meet with faith. (Chap. 49.)

. . . . . .

"Abandon your saintliness; put away your prudence; and the people will gain a hundredfold!

"Abandon your benevolence; put away your justice; and the people will return to filial piety and paternal devotion.

"Abandon smartness; give up greed; and thieves and robbers will no longer exist.

"These are three things for which culture is insufficient. Therefore it is said:

> 'Hold fast to that which will endure.
> Show thyself simple, preserve thee pure,
> And lessen self with desires fewer.' (Chap. 19.)

. . . . . .

"Superior virtue is non-assertion and without pretension. Inferior virtue asserts and makes pretensions.

"Superior benevolence acts but makes not pretensions. Superior justice acts and makes pretensions." (Chap. 38.)

The three "jewels of character" are gentleness, humility, frugality. Under no circumstances will the Taoist act other than with gentleness. "There is nothing in the world more soft and weak than water, yet for attacking things that are firm and strong nothing surpasses it." So, too, the true Taoist humbles himself and becomes exalted. "There is no guilt greater than to sanction ambition; no calamity greater than to be discontented with one's lot; no fault greater than the desire for gain. The sufficiency of contentment is an enduring and unchanging sufficiency."

In precise keeping with Lao-Tze's doctrine of opposites, the counterpart of frugality is liberality even as is courage of gentleness and honored recognition of humility. "The wise man does not accumulate. The more he expends for others, the more does he possess of his own; the more he gives to others, the more does he have himself."

The dominant thought in Lao-Tze's teaching was that man should seek to possess that inward deep morality of the spirit which makes him indifferent to rules and spontaneously, intuitively guides him to what is right. Just as Jesus, in his discussion with the tricky lawyer, took the ground that he who has the spirit of love to God and love to man in his heart has that out of which all good actions will spontaneously flow, so Lao-Tze held that there is in

every man the "Tao," that divine spirit which has its counterpart in the external world as the basis of Nature's order and harmony, and in devotion to which "the incomplete achieves completion, and the ideal of perfection, realization."

The essential differences between the founders of Confucianism and Taoism and their respective theses may be summed up as follows:

Lao-Tze was an ascetic, a recluse; he went into voluntary exile, disgusted with the political and social disorder of his time.

Confucius was a man of the world, yet without worldliness, through personal example influencing his fellow-men for good.

Lao-Tze was an unshorn, tattered, half-starved hermit; the occupant of a hollow rock or cave in the wilderness.

Confucius was a sleek, well-fed, comfortable philosopher and statesman; enjoying the favor of princes and kings.

Lao-Tze sought to reform each human soul at the roots of his being, to purify the heart, the inner springs of conduct, believing that all external relations would right themselves as a result.

Confucius began at the other end, with etiquette, manners, moral rules, believing that the heart would thereby be reformed.

Lao-Tze determined man's life from within; Confucius, from without. The former was subjective, the latter objective in attitude and method. The one operated from the center to the circum-

ference, the other from the circumference to the center.

Lao-Tze was an anarchist in the philosophical sense, opposed to governing and in favor of spontaneity and independence in thought and conduct. Confucius was a monarchist, wishing to have government penetrate to the very heart of the individual, the family and the state. To Lao-Tze, Confucius seemed a fussy meddler in the affairs of the universe; in the eyes of Confucius Lao-Tze was an impractical, paradoxical dreamer.

Lao-Tze cared for wisdom, not scholarship. Confucius cared for scholarship and hoped to get wisdom through learning.

Lao-Tze's system called for much patient and hard thinking, for analysis of the condensed ethical truths of the "Tao-Te-King," offered, as they were, without commentary or explanation and interspersed with metaphysical argument.

The code of Confucius called for no such mental and physical strain. It was concrete, intelligible, practical; free from speculative elements, serviceable as a textbook of instruction for public schools and actually was made the basis of all civil service examinations, the sole gateway to office. No wonder, then, that in view of these differences, Confucius as a moral leader eclipsed Lao-Tze, though much of the latter's message is of transcendent worth and singularly suited to our own age with its passion for external results that are tangible, its devotion to ameliorating social and economic conditions, as con-

trasted with the more radical devotion to that which is impalpable and imperishable, the infinite and eternal worth in man.

Finally, it should be noted that the Tao-Teh-King has only a nominal influence on modern Taoism,—a far cry from the Taoism of Lao-Tze. Had the latter retained its philosophico-mystical elements, which made it attractive chiefly to contemplative recluses, it could never have become popular with the masses as it is today. But like the Buddhism of Gotama which took on strange and superstitious forms after its introduction into China, Japan, Thibet, so the Taoism of Lao-Tze underwent similar modification and today has little else than the name to link it with the teachings of the Founder.

# CHAPTER VI

## THE BIBLE OF MOHAMMEDANISM— THE KORAN

### (a) *Mohammed, his Mission and his Critics*

No other scriptures, not even the Christian, are so widely or so frequently read as is the Mohammedan *Koran*.. Some two hundred million Moslems turn to this sacred Book every day, in accordance with a decree of Mohammed. Before coming to its contents we must take note of certain preliminary considerations essential to proper understanding and appreciation of the Book.

Thirteen centuries ago, on the Arabian peninsula, where the streams of commerce and of culture met and mingled in the Middle Age, Mohammed founded a new type of Semitic religion which bears his name and which today extends over an area equal to one-third of the globe. From Arabia it spread eastward over Persia, Turkestan, Afghanistan; westward, across Turkey and Asia Minor; northward, to Syria; southward, to Africa, covering more than half of that continent. It found its way also to India, and beyond, to the islands of Sumatra, Java and Borneo.

The Niger and the Nile, the Jordan and the Ganges, the Maritza and the Yang-tse-Kiang, all

fertilize Mohammedan soil. Twice did this religion threaten to overrun Europe. First, in 732, when Abd-er-Rahman had his famous encounter with Charles Martel, and forthwith the cross, not the crescent, became the emblem of European faith. Then, again, in 1683, when John, King of Poland, at the head of twenty thousand soldiers, defeated the Mohammedan army at Vienna, it was once more decreed that Mohammedanism should not be the religion of Europe. Yet how incalculably great is the world's debt to the early representatives of this faith! For it was they who transmitted the treasures of Greek literature from the Middle Age to the Renaissance; they who originated the graceful art forms of which the Taj-Mahal and the Alhambra are the most famous examples. It was they, again, who contributed to the sciences of algebra and chemistry, astronomy and medicine; they who dotted the Saracen empire with universities and who built at Bagdad and at Cairo the most renowned libraries in the world. During those centuries of ecclesiastical despotism when the Christian Church suppressed all intellectual activities save those that were theological, causing the talent that reproduces to supplant the genius that creates, Mohammedans did all in their power to encourage and stimulate research in every branch of human inquiry. Arabic is the most widely-spoken language on earth and though Chinese characters are used by more people, knowledge of Arabic will carry one farther round the world. And with the Arabic vocabulary has

gone the Mohammedan religion. Today we decorate our walls and floors with fabrics that Mohammedans taught us to weave. We regale our senses with perfumes they taught us to make, we teach our children algebra and higher mathematics from text-books traceable to Mohammedan sources. All this deserves to be remembered especially because of the still widespread impression that indebtedness is on the side of Mohammedans alone, that they owe to the civilizing agencies of Christianity their gradual emergence from semi-barbarism!

Though Mohammed was born twelve centuries after Confucius we know far less of him than of the Chinese sage. The only contemporary source of information concerning Mohammed is the Koran, but its concern is with beliefs and observances rather than with biographical details which were known to his hearers and so needed no mention. The earliest biography of Mohammed, like that of Jesus, was written long after his death, and its unreliability is considerably accentuated by the rapidity with which legends gathered about him as they did about Jesus. The name *Mohammed* means "the praised one," an epithet attached to his real name which tradition tells us was Kutam. Born at Mecca in 571 he was orphaned before he had reached his teens. How deeply he felt the deprivations of orphanage is attested by many a passage in the Koran, enjoining upon the faithful tender regard for the person of orphans and scrupulous care not to touch their

property. Thus, in the ninety-third "Sura," we read:

"Did not Allah find thee an orphan and hath he not taken care of thee? And did he not find thee wandering in error, and hath he not guided thee into truth? And did he not find thee needy, and hath he not enriched thee? Wherefore, oppress not the orphan: neither repulse the beggar; but declare the goodness of thy Lord."

Bereft of both father and mother the lad was adopted, first by his grandfather and later by his uncle, a rich, generous, magnanimous man, who though disapproving of his nephew's radical tendencies in religion, yet, on grounds of kinship, gave him freely of the abundance of his possessions. But one day financial reverses came to this noble guardian and the boy was obliged to earn his own living. For several years he tended sheep on the neighboring hills, till, at the age of twenty-four, he entered the service of a rich widow, Kadijah by name, acting as camel driver and conductor of caravans journeying between Jerusalem and Damascus. So infatuated was she with Mohammed that she married him, and though she was fifteen years his senior, their married life seems to have been both happy and mutually inspiring. While Kadijah lived she was Mohammed's only wife and only after her death did he begin his remarkable accumulation of consorts. Some of them were widows of followers and he took them out of charity but in most of his marriages his pas-

sion for beautiful women is apparent. No authentic portrait of Mohammed has come down to us, chiefly because of that abhorrence of idolatry and image-worship which the prophet instilled into the hearts of his followers. All the portraits that have come down to us are outright fabrications, in the production of which imagination and prejudice have proven powerful creative agencies. Nevertheless, from various sources, especially the "Sunna" or tradition, we are enabled to form a mental picture of Mohammed's personal appearance. A man of medium height he was, with a large, well-shaped head; his dark, curly hair streaming down upon his broad shoulders and his restless eye looking out beneath heavy eyelashes and heavier eyebrows. His nose was slightly aquiline and his teeth were regular and white as hailstones. Intellectually his attainments were slight. Learning in Arabia in his time consisted in knowledge of poems and tribal traditions and stories, all acquired orally. It is doubtful whether Mohammed could read or write. His education consisted in observing men and facts, and instinct took the place of logic. A multitude of incidents illustrate his knowledge of human nature and his practical judgment, wisdom and tact. On the other hand, his attempt to assimilate those parts that he could not understand of Judaism and of Christianity, as they were presented to him through fanciful tales, led to frightful confusion of ideas and gross misinterpretations of both these religions.

Morally, his life was exemplary in its simplicity,

sincerity and courage. His was indeed the simple life, often lived to the point of severe austerity. We read that at times he would go for a month or more without eating a single hearty meal, lighting his own fire, cooking his own food, mending his own clothes and shoes in order that his slaves might enjoy a larger share of freedom. In the staunchness with which he stood by his unpopular convictions, he showed great moral bravery and, again, in the vehemence with which he denounced the idolatries and polytheisms of the Meccans. No amount of opposition swerved him from his prophetic path. Often disheartened and depressed he yet held to his belief in the certain victory of his cause. His was a gift not always possessed by prophets,—wisdom to insist on the main essentials and to stop at the point where insistence becomes dangerous or fruitless; wisdom, also, to be conservative in pushing his reform ideas. Afflicted with a nervous disorder that sometimes caused loss of consciousness, it was in one of these attacks, while meditating in a cave, that he became apprised of his mission. Tradition tells us that he fell into convulsions, streams of perspiration rolled down his cheeks, his eyes burned like glowing coals, and as he was about to end his misery by leaping over the bluff he heard the voice of the angel Gabriel saying, "Stop, thou art the prophet of the Lord." Running to Kadijah, he exclaimed, "Am I in truth a prophet, or am I mad?" To which Kadijah answered: "Thou hast spoken truly; no harmful thing has happened thee; thou dost not

return evil for evil; thou art kind to relatives and friends. Rejoice, thou wilt be the prophet of prophets." What a significant reply! For assuredly there can be no safer test of fitness for a prophetic career than the possession of precisely such moral traits. But Mohammed hesitated at first, just as Jesus and Gotama, Zoroaster and Moses hesitated before entering upon their prophetic calling. The temptation-legends, related of these leaders,—what are they but the figurative expression of that moment of doubt as to the true path of duty which all five experienced prior to assumption of the prophetic office? Hearing that assassination was planned, Mohammed resolved on flight, making his memorable escape in the dead of night, July 16, 622, to the city north of Mecca, now known as Medina, and there he passed the remaining ten years of his life. Thus the ministry of Mohammed was identified with both Mecca and Medina.

A word as to the difference between the two ministries, for it conditions intelligent reading of the Koran. Throughout his ten years' ministry at Mecca, Mohammed had been simply the negative type of reformer, denouncing the vices of his country-men, rebuking low standards of business dealing and decrying the crass idolatry into which his own native Arabian religion had degenerated. He was an Amos preaching to a small community. But at Medina he becomes a Hildebrand, ruling all Arabia with an autocratic hand. He assumes the rôle of legislator, social and political organizer, conqueror.

He drafts a new charter for the city, defines the duties of citizens, converts indiscriminate alms-giving into systematic taxation for the support of his theocracy, prohibits intersectarian warfare and compels the disputants to submit their differences to him for settlement. Finally, he leads an aggresive, conquering crusade, winning over all Arabia to his message and claims.

That Mohammed was an impostor it is difficult, if not impossible, to believe. Orthodox Christians and crude rationalists, it is true, have united in so regarding him. Voltaire it was who voiced their common view in a verse as satirical as it is unjust:

"Chaque peuple à son tour a brillé sur la terre
Par les lois, par les arts et surtout par les guerres.
Le temps d'Arabie est enfin venu:
Il faut un nouveau culte, il faut de nouveaux fers,
Il faut un nouveau Dieu pour l'aveugle univers."

Voltaire's thought was that credulous humanity had been victimized by the crafty prophet of Arabia, who palmed off a new cult, new chains, and a new God on an unsuspecting public! "Amen," cried the crude rationalists, for to them all religion is deception, an unscrupulous invention of politic priests and scheming prophets. But I hold that among the notions to be relegated to the realm of prejudice and superstition are these: religion is an invention, all prophets are impostors, Mohammed perpetrated the most egregious fraud on record.

That Mohammed was not an impostor can be

proved by reference to several significant incidents in his career. As a young man he had received a handsome salary for serving as custodian of the "Kaaba" that enshrined the sacred stone worshipped by resident believers and by visiting pilgrims. But in time there came to be associated with this object of veneration certain superstitious practices which Mohammed could not conscientiously endorse. To criticise them meant loss of his position and salary, yet he did not hesitate to denounce them and promptly sacrificed his profitable custodianship. Surely such conduct was not that of an impostor. Again, when implored by his wealthy uncle to desist from preaching "radical" views, Mohammed to name his own price for the silence his uncle desired, he repudiated the tempting offer, preferring the luxury of free thought and free speech with poverty, if need be, to the luxury of ease and wealth with a tarnished soul. Read his own brave and uncompromising utterance: "Were I to be offered the sun in my right hand and the moon in my left hand to induce me to abandon my undertaking, the offer would be futile, for I will not rest until the Lord carry his cause to victory, or till I die for it." Could such be the part of an impostor? Once more, his only claim was that of being the instrument through which God had revealed His will, as recorded in the Sacred Book. He made no claim to be infallible, or sinless, or supernatural. "Praise me not," he said, "as Jesus was praised. I am liable to err as other men,—I, too, need forgiveness for sin." Such, surely,

is not the language of an impostor. Without pausing to adduce further evidence of Mohammed's sincerity and integrity of purpose, we may justly believe that nothing but the bigotry, malice and jealousy of enemies originated the charge of imposture. And nothing but blind prejudice and lazy indifference to truth can account for perpetuation of the charge.

The Mohammedan scriptures are certain to fall short of their due if the reader comes to them with any of the traditional estimates of their author. These have ranged all the way from that of the Muslim to whom he is *the* Prophet, to that of orthodox Christians who call him "the lying prophet" and look upon his name as a synonym of Satan. Dante described him as rent from the chin to where the body ends, wandering aimlessly about in the darkest region of hell among those who rent Christianity by controversy and schism. Luther, in one of his vehement expostulations upon people he despised, exclaimed, "Oh, fie, you horrid devil, you damned Mohammed." Melancthon declared that Mohammed was "inspired by Satan." For seven centuries after the prophet's death, not a public word in his defense or behalf was heard. The first just and kindly utterance came from the lips of Sir John Mandeville, an English traveler, and his tribute sounds like a bugle-note in the long, dark night of bigotry and hate. Four centuries later, Lessing, in his "Nathan der Weise," paused to pay his respects to the essential worth of Mohammed's religion and by his parable of the three rings, taught posterity a

permanently helpful lesson in the ethics of criticism. Then came Carlyle, fairly stunning the British public by placing Mohammed among the heroes of history. Yet notwithstanding the enlightening utterances of these candid investigators, prejudice, born of ignorance, persists in maintaining and circulating opinions about Mohammed that are without any valid basis whatsoever. Pulpit, platform and press must all plead guilty to unwarranted misrepresentation. I cite the preacher who described Mohammed as "a fanatic who used his religion as a cloak of immorality." I quote a lecturer who said that "Mohammed's religion was synonymous with bravery, bigotry, knavery, sensuality and abysmal ignorance." I recall the definition of Mohammedanism in an early edition of Webster's Dictionary—"a religion of imposture."

But, thanks to the labors of the distinguished Ignaz Goldziher, the foremost expositor of the Koran, and other contemporary scholars, appreciation is steadily taking the place of prejudice, and knowledge of the truth about the Prophet banishing what ignorance and antipathy have produced.

### (b) *The Koran and its Sources*

As a further aid to thorough understanding of the contents of the Koran we must take account of the influence exerted by environment. In our study of the Sacred Scriptures of Hinduism, we saw how the warm, benignant climate and rich, fruitful soil of

southeastern India fostered a brooding, speculative tendency among the devotees of Brahmanism. Similarly in our study of the Avesta we saw how the less favorable environment of the Parsees in ancient Persia (Iran) precluded philosophizing and compelled hard work, Zoroaster making of industry a *sine quâ non* of salvation. So, too, the Arabian desert left its mark on Mohammedanism, moulding, in no small measure, both the thought and imagination of the Muslim. The dry electric air of the desert, the sharp diurnal changes of temperature, the unmitigated solar radiation, the empty environment, all conspired to make tense the nerves and turn the Semite to meditation and contemplation of the supernatural. Again, the stern fatalism and determinism so often met with in the Koran, far from being a deduction from the postulate of Allah (Mohammed was no philosopher), must be ascribed to desert-influence. "Nowhere," it has been said, "is Nature so implacable, the sky so pitiless, the earth so miserly and prayer and effort so unavailing. In the presence of the water-hole gone dry, or the descending cloud of locusts, man is overwhelmed by the sense of the utter uselessness of struggle with an unrelenting and inescapable fate." A recent explorer of the Sahara reports the fatalistic mood which settled upon an entire caravan when confronted by the danger of death from thirst. Fatalism was a large factor in the victories of early Islam because it benumbed the fear of death in battle. Once more, the admonition to "give alms," repeatedly recurring in the Koran, is

another instance of adaptation to a desert-environment inasmuch as the *ghazus,* or robber-raids, left many a man, like Job, wealthy yesterday, a beggar today.

Thus, the desert-setting in which Mohammedanism arose accounts for much of its recorded teaching and for the imagery in which Mohammed presented it. He made the mirage a symbol of the false hope of unbelievers (Sura 24), and the sand, drifting before the wind-storm, emblematic of the destruction that would overwhelm them (Sura 67). We read of Allah seating himself on his throne as a camel-driver seats himself firmly on the camel's back; of date-palm groves in the oasis, a simile for Paradise; of "yellow camels" likened to "sparks from the fires of hell" (Sura 78); of the revival of the earth after a rainfall as symbolic of the resurrection (Sura 50).

The Koran—"that which is to be recited,"—was at first not a book at all, but a collection of admonitions, threats, promises, instructions addressed by Mohammed to groups of turbulent and untutored Arabs, each set of "revealed" utterances jotted down at the time by an amanuensis on any material ready to hand. Finally, the collection of disconnected revelations, covering twenty-one years, was edited and put into permanent form by the beloved disciple and immediate successor of the Prophet, Abu Bekr, in 634. For the next eight years this was the standard text of the Koran. But in the making of copies from this original, various readings of sundry passages were inevitably recorded, giving rise to many

disputes as to which version was the correct one. To prevent perpetuation of these disputes, the Caliph Othman, in 642, established a final standard text and all earlier copies of the Koran were committed to the flames. Thus this sacred Book exists in but a single edition and is the work of but a single author. The unity of thought, the uniformity of diction and the peculiarly labored style all combine to show that the *suras* (chapters) of the Koran are the work of but one mind.

The eternality of the Koran is a cardinal belief of Muslim; they hold that if all extant copies were to be destroyed no permanent loss would be thereby entailed because an everlasting copy of the Book is preserved in Heaven by Allah's throne and by means of relays of angels the total content of the Book could be "revealed" afresh. "It is a glorious Koran, written on the preserved Tables. Rejoice in what hath been sent down to thee." (Sura 85, 13.)

Described in a single sentence, the Koran is a potpourri of myths, legends, narratives, legal statutes, ethical precepts and ceremonial injunctions. It is a reservoir into which, through Mohammed's mind, many different streams of Jewish, Christian and Arabian thought have been emptied. As a conductor of caravans Mohammed must have acquired considerable information on Biblical subjects. Tales of Abraham, Moses, the Prophets, Jesus, related by not very competent reporters, entered Muhammed's head and fermented there. What he knew of Old and

New Testament characters he never derived from direct contact with these books. Possibly he never saw a Hebrew Old Testament or a Greek New Testament, for there existed no Arabic version of the old or the New Testament prior to the time of Mohammed. Nor is there more than one direct quotation from the Bible in the Koran, viz.: (Sura XX 85) "My servants, the righteous, shall inherit the earth" (Ps. XXXVII 29.) But many a Hebrew and Christian story, as recorded in Rabbinical books, he doubtless heard, while such apocalyptic books as Joel, Daniel, Ezekiel, Enoch, Revelation, exerted their influence, as the Koran amply testifies.

His originality was not that of the reformer who is the first to conceive and present a fruitful idea, but rather that of him who plants what he has acquired in many minds and fertilizes it there by the persuasive power of his own quickening personality. The genius of Mohammed appeared not in the creation of new material but rather in the adoption and blending of various traditions—Jewish, Christian, Hanifite—to suit the exigencies of each occasion as it arose. Biblical reminiscences, Rabbinic legends, Arabian stories, Christian traditions, drawn for the most part from apocryphal sources, all passed through his active mind and issued thence in strange forms, "tinged with poetry and enthusiasm," to encourage the faithful, or to strike terror into the hearts of the infidels. Mohammed was neither a theologian nor a philosopher but a religious enthusiast with a

genius for adoption and adaptation of Jewish and Christian lore. He spoke his "revelations" as they came, regardless of their agreement with or contradiction of each other. When modern Muslim find two contradictory injunctions on one and the same subject, they take the one best suited to modern ideas. For this they find warrant in the second Sura: "What verses we cancel or cause thee to forget, we give a better, or its like." Already there are over two hundred such cancelled verses on which Muslim are agreed. The ultimate criterion on which the abrogation of passages in the Koran depends is the agreement of Muslim themselves. "My people," said Mohammed, "will never agree on an error," and in such agreement is the hope of Islam.

From the surcharged brain of Mohammed his thought pushed on undiked, unchanneled; too swift to allow of skilful or consistent expression. No wonder that of all Bibles the Koran is the least attractive to the general reader. Curiosity may draw him to its pages but he is soon repelled by the lack of continuity of thought and the absence of any charm of style, the thought and the style suggesting the camel of the desert—free to browse wherever stubble is to be found. The one hundred and fourteen *suras* (chapters) of the Book are provided with superscriptions indeed, but these, for the most part, bear no relation to the contents. Nor have the suras been arranged according to any definite system other than that of placing the longest and best-known ones

first, though even this has not been adhered to throughout. The events narrated follow no chronological order, and only the patient scholarship of specialists has enabled us to shape from this literary waste the Prophet's thought. Carlyle, who was Mohammed's foremost British admirer, complained that the Koran was the most toilsome reading he ever undertook. He described it as "a wearisome, confused jumble; endless iterations, long-windedness, entanglement; most crude and recondite; insupportable stupidity in short." But, thanks to the labors of European Arabic scholars who have applied the principles of "the higher criticism" to the Koran, we can now arrange its chapters in chronological order, dividing the Book into three sections, corresponding to the three periods in the Prophet's career. The first of these, marked by doubt, misgiving, misappreciation and opposition, is readily discerned in a series of chapters aglow with enthusiasm bordering on frenzy, recording his visions with a fervor that persuades us of his sincerity. The second period was that of growing appreciation and success, and is reflected in chapters that are marked by calm, dispassionate argument addressed to converts who recognize his authority. The third period finds the Prophet making concessions and compromises for the sake of further success. He has grown shrewd, calculating, politic in his aggressive crusade, and these qualities come to light in a group of chapters whose weak, willowy utterances betray a decided decline from the high plane where sincere consecra-

tion and perfervid enthusiasm had transfigured the man.*

In passing it should be said that the fault found with the style and form of the Koran may be due in no small measure to our difficulty in rightly appraising the psychology of the Prophet. To do him proper justice we must bear in mind his peculiar temperament and the kind of environment to which his message was brought. Moreover, we have to remember that the Muslim regard the Koran as the finest of all literary productions, its matter all true, its manner perfect, its style a veritable miracle. Professor Margoliouth puts the issue admirably in his introduction to Rodwell's rendering of the Koran, one of the best translations yet produced. "We are here in touch with an untutored but fervent mind, trying to realize itself and to assimilate certain great truths which have been powerfully borne in upon him, in order to impart them in a convincing form to his fellow-tribesmen. He is surrounded by obstacles of every kind, yet he manfully struggles on with the message that is within him. Learning he has none, or next to none. His chief objects of knowledge are floating stories and traditions largely picked up from hearsay, and his over-wrought mind is his only teacher. The only literary compositions to which he had ever listened were the half-cultured, yet often wildly powerful rhapsodies of early Arabian minstrels. What wonder then that his Koran

* See Rodwell's translation in Everyman's Library, vol. 380.

took a form which to our colder temperaments sounds strange, unbalanced and fantastic?"

### (c) *The Contents of the Koran*

Our selection of typical passages from the Koran may well begin with the prayer more frequently recited by believers than any other. It has been called "the Lord's Prayer of Mohammedanism" because of its frequent repetition by the faithful, and because, like the Lord's Prayer in the gospel of Matthew, it consists of seven verses and is regarded as a "summary of the faith."

Praise be to God, Lord of the worlds!
The compassionate, the merciful!
King of the day of reckoning!
Thee only do we worship, and to Thee do we cry for help.
Guide Thou us on the straight path,
The path of those to whom Thou hast been gracious;
With whom thou art not angry, and who go not astray.

Expressive of the utilitarian character of the ethics of the Koran, its advocacy of right conduct with an eye to the hereafter, is the following:

Woe to those who *stint* the measure:
Who when they take by measure from others, exact the full;
But when they mete to them or weigh to them, minish,—
What! have they no thought that they shall be raised again for the great day?
The day when mankind shall stand before the Lord of the worlds.

Yes! the register of the wicked is in Sidjin, a book distinctly written. Woe on that day to those who treated the day of judgment as a lie!
Yes; they shall be shut out as by a veil from their Lord on that day;
Then shall they be burned in Hell-fire:
Then shall it be said to them, "This is what ye deemed a lie."
Even so. But the register of the righteous is in Illiyoun; a book distinctly written; the angels who draw nigh unto God attest it.
Surely, among delights shall the righteous dwell!
Seated on bridal couches they will gaze around;
Thou shalt mark in their faces the brightness of delight.

In the ethical legislation that Mohammed provided for his theocracy, special stress was laid upon total abstinence from intoxicating liquor and humaneness. Drunkenness is the vice most to be feared in tropical countries and was generally condemned as a violation of Divine Law. Mohammed's opposition to Christianity was based, in part, upon its failure to put an absolute veto on the use of intoxicants. General Lew Wallace, after twenty years' residence in Constantinople, declared that while Christian drunkards were to be seen daily in the city streets, he never once saw a drunken Mohammedan. According to the late President Eliot of Harvard University, Mohammedanism has been a vastly better thing for many of the tribes of Africa, habitually drunk, than Christianity could have been. A "Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals" is unknown in Mohammedan countries except in cities overrun with

Christians, and I have observed in Turkish cemeteries, the four corners of the slabs that cover graves are grooved to catch the rainfall, so that the birds may drink and sing over the places where their human brethren sleep.

The charge of advocating polygamy and slavery has been made against Mohammed many times. But it were well if his critics paused to remember that these evils existed for centuries before his time and that the most he could do was to improve the condition of slaves and the position of women. From several Suras we learn that he inculcated kindly treatment of slaves and ranked their emancipation as a virtue for which the slaveholder would be abundantly rewarded in paradise. Certainly we today are too near the "Emancipation Proclamation" to dare to reproach Mohammed for not having abolished slavery.

In dealing with the problem of marriage and divorce Mohammed limited the number of wives a man could have to four, at the same time prescribing monogamy for all who could not make proper provision for more than one wife. He conditioned divorce upon four months' support of the wife after separation had taken place and he required four witnesses to vindicate a charge of adultery, punishing with a hundred stripes and imprisonment any one who failed to prove the charge.

"They who intend to abstain from their wives shall wait four months, but if they go back from their purpose, then verily God is gracious. Ye may

divorce your wives twice; keep them honorably, or put them away with kindness." "Marry but two, or three, or four; and if ye have misgiving that ye will not act equitably, then one only." (Sura II.)

"If any of your women be charged with whoredom then bring four witnesses against her from among yourselves and if they bear witness to the fact, shut her up within her house till death release her." "Allow not your wives to depart unless they have committed a proven adultery." (Sura IV.)

"Lodge the divorced according to your means and distress them not by putting them to straits." (Sura LXV.)

One integrating ethical idea pervades the Koran—submission. The supreme duty of Mohammedans is to submit to the will of "the omnipotent, resistless One," the One "to whom everything is subject," "the Lord of the East and of the West," the "all-governing, all-compelling One"; "the mighty and merciful One," merciful because omnipotent. He is likened to the wind and all mankind to a field of grain that sways with the blowing of the wind. He is the heavenly Sultan and Muslim are they who submit to his decrees; they who, like the willows, bend before the blast.

As set forth in the Koran the doctrine of submission involves four distinct duties:

First; To abjure idolatry, which is the bestowal upon false gods of the homage due to Allah alone. Idolatry, indeed, is deemed the unpardonable sin of Islam. "Verily, God will not forgive," we read in

the fourth Sura. Nay more, the faithful are bidden by the Prophet not to pray for idolators—witness the injunction of the ninth Sura: "It is not for the faithful to pray for the forgiveness of those who associate other beings with God, after it has been made clear that they are to be inmates of Hell." Just as the subjects of an earthly Sultan are instantly punished to the full extent of the civil law when they dare to enthrone a usurper and do him homage, so idolators who dare to acknowledge any other God than this heavenly Sultan will be punished hereafter, on the Judgment Day, to the full extent of the religious law. Every mosque, every palace bears witness to Mohammed's abhorrence of idolatry. Nowhere are statues, or images, or any sort of reproductions of the human form to be seen, but everywhere arabesque decorations,—those geometric traceries that reproduce only objects from the inanimate world.

Second; To extend the heavenly Sultan's dominion on earth, to make converts and by force if need be, because refusal to acknowledge and obey Allah is rebellion, and rebellion must be suppressed, by persuasion, if possible, but if not, then by force.

Here we must distinguish between the Prophet's earlier and later injunctions. In the earlier chapters of the Koran he constantly exhorts his Meccan followers to bear patiently the wrongs inflicted on them because of their religion. His earliest permission to fight is given to those "who have been driven forth from their homes undeservedly" merely for saying

"Our Lord is God."* A more general warrant for making war on the Meccans is given in the second Sura (186-190): "Fight in God's way with those who fight with you, but do not take the aggressive; verily God loves not the aggressor." Later, Mohammed used force without hesitation, not only against the Meccans, but to subdue other cities, like Ta'if, and to bring the Bedouin tribes into submission.† But it is clear that the motive of these wars, as of those against the Jews in Medina and its vicinity, was political rather than religious, though Mohammed, as the head of a church-state, doubtless regarded the two as identical. At the moment of his death he had an army marshalled for an expedition into Syria. In one of the apparently authentic traditions he urges his followers to make war upon unbelievers until they confess the unity of God and then grant them security. In his aggressive policy he distinguished polytheists and idolators from the adherents of the "revealed religions, Judaism and Christianity," tolerating the latter and exacting a tax from them for protection received, while the former he constrained to abandon their errors and submit to Allah.§

Never has it been either the principle or the practice of Islam to convert people generally, by forcible means. Many of the early caliphs, for economic reasons, disapproved of voluntary conversion of their

* Sura XXII, 40, 42.

† Sura XVI, 37, 84; XXIX, 43; XLII, 47, 257, 64, 12.

§ Sura XVI, 126; XLII, 13, 14; III, 19, 99, 100; XXII, 66; IX, 6, 11.

Jewish and Christian subjects. More fanatical rulers laid the adherents of other religions under so many disadvantages that members of them became Muslim for relief. In the first appendix to T. W. Arnold's "The Preaching of Islam" there is an exhaustive array of quotations from the Koran, regarding Mohammed's attitude to missionary work, which the doctrine of submission requires. Here, in chronological order, the texts are marshalled, including those abrogated by the agreements of the Muslim.

The third obligation which the doctrine of submission involves is obedience to the precepts of Allah, the making of one's moral account "square" *before* the Judgment Day dawns. For, on that Day, the heavenly Sultan determines the fate of each human soul. Then will a man walking to the Judgment-seat be met by a loathsome-looking object to which he will say, "Be gone": but it will reply, "I cannot, I am thy conscience." Then will the fraudulent buyer and the fraudulent seller walk to the Judgment-seat with the goods they dishonestly bought or sold tied to their necks and dragging behind them! No religion has made so much of the utilitarian motive of reward and punishment as has Mohammedanism, nor is it anywhere presented in such frankly materialistic terms as in the Koran.

The fourth factor in the ethics of submission is loyal devotion to the "five pillars of fidelity," as they are called, the simple religious forms, binding upon all believers:—

1. Repetition of the creed, "There is no God but Allah, and Mohammed is his prophet."

2. Prayer and ablutions five times daily in response to the Muezzin when he ascends his minaret to summon the faithful to prayer.

3. Almsgiving, two and a half per cent of one's possessions to be devoted to philanthropy.

"Turn thy face toward the sacred Mosque of Mecca. Wherever ye be turn your faces toward that part. They to whom the Book hath been given know this to be the truth from their Lord. God is not regardless of what ye do." (Sura II.)

"Give alms for your own weal because such as are saved from their own greed are prospered. If we lend God a generous loan He will double it to you and forgive you." (Sura LIV.)

4. Fasting from sunrise to sunset of the month of "Ramadan," in which the prophet fled from Mecca to Medina.

5. A pilgrimage, at least once in one's lifetime, to Mecca.

In the simplicity of these requirements Mohammed showed his practical wisdom. Only the fifth was for many a hardship, and eventually it was modified to meet conditions where fulfilment was most difficult or impossible. So the Roman Catholic Church protects its members against ceremonial oppression by corresponding concessions; so the apostle Paul abolished the rite of circumcision, though deemed by his fellow-Jews to be the badge of noblest

citizenship. Even in the case of the second requirement latitude was allowed, witness the following:

O believers! when ye address yourselves to prayer, wash your faces, and your hands up to the elbow, and wipe your heads, and your feet to the ankles.

And if you have become unclean, then purify yourselves. But if ye are sick, or on a journey, and ye find no water, then take clean sand and rub your faces and hands with it.

God hath promised to those who believe, and do the things that are right, that for them is pardon and a great reward.

But they who are infidels and treat our signs as lies—these shall be meted with Hell-fire.

When we remember the utterly uncivilized character of the tribes that inhabited Africa and parts of Asia at the time of Mohammed's appearance, we may well believe that his gospel of submission (islam) was exactly suited to the needs of those peoples. They were still in the childhood stage of development in which obedience to rulers and rules is the highest virtue. Nor is anything in religious history more remarkable than the way in which Mohammed fitted his transfiguring ideas into the existing social system of Arabia. To his everlasting credit it must be said that in lifting to a higher plane of life the communities of his day and place, he achieved that which neither the Judaism nor the Christianity of mediaeval Arabia could accomplish. Nay more, in the fulfilment of that civilizing work Mohammed rendered invaluable service, not only to Arabia, but to all the world.

# CHAPTER VII

## THE BIBLE OF JUDAISM

### (a) The Old Testament Canon

We come now to the religious literature of a people whose history extends over thirty-five centuries and is, without exception, the most remarkable in the history of the nations; a people, homeless, suspected, persecuted; wanderers over the face of the earth, seeking a permanent home and finding none; a people subjected throughout the Christian centuries to gross indignities from the people of Jesus and Paul, both of whom were Jews; a people victimized by prejudice so deep and inhuman that even little children of refined Jewish parents have come home from school crying because of the abuse heaped on them by the children of parents whose finest religious inheritances are from Moses and his successors; a people whose religious patriotism has been so intensified by persecution that even the most liberal among them insist on remaining Jews so long as Christians make it a reproach to be a Jew; a people who founded the first universities of continental Europe and who, in an age of superstition, when faith was blind and ignorance a passport to Paradise, fostered education, advanced the arts and sciences and who count among the contributors to our civi-

lization, Astruc and Ibn Ezra, Maimonides and Moses Mendelssohn, Spinoza, Heine, Auerbach and the Montefiores; a people numbering today fifteen millions in all; and of the nearly two millions in Greater New York, it must be said that, as a class, they are the most self-respecting, the most self-reliant, the most self-supporting and law-abiding portion of our mixed population.

The canonical Hebrew scriptures are contained in the Old Testament; the uncanonical in the so-called *Apocrypha,* the *Pseudepigrapha,* and the *Talmud.* The word *canon,* it will be remembered, means a measuring rule. Applied to sacred books it indicates those that conformed to a given rule, or standard of inspiration, those in which the will of God was revealed, or those worthy to be selected for public reading at church services. The Hindus, Zoroastrians, Confucians and others had as we have seen, the idea of a canon of scriptures, but no nation ever held it quite so strongly as did the Jews, because, (a) no other stood in such intimate relation to the Deity; (b) no other possessed a "covenant" like unto theirs. Hence the doctrine of the Synagogue, from the beginning, was that all the books of the Old Testament had their origin in divine inspiration, and both the canon and the theory of it passed over into the Christian Church. At first its only sacred book was the Old Testament, and in Jesus' day only "The Law and the Prophets"; but when the collection known as the New Testament was formed, the distinction between the Old and the New Testament

inevitably obtained. The term *testament* is a synonym for *covenant,* or *contract,* or *compact,* and in Biblical usage refers to the contract formed between Israel's God, *Yahweh* and his people. They claimed that it was originally made with Abraham (Gen. XI, 1 foll.) and renewed with Isaac (Gen. XXVI, 24) with Jacob (Gen. XXVIII, 13), and finally, at Sinai, with the fugitive people descended from these patriarchs, (Exod. XXXIV, 27). By it they were bound to exclusive devotion to Yahweh and to certain observances and actions which manifested and emphasized their adherence to Him. According to this compact He agreed to protect and prosper His people if they would worship only Him and obey His commandments. But when, thirteen centuries later, through the genius of the Apostle Paul, Christianity, as an organized religion, came into the world, he put forth a substitute-compact—one sealed, as he said, by the blood of Jesus. To distinguish this later testament from the earlier, the terms *Old Testament* and *New Testament* were adopted. And Paul, in the second of the letters to his converts at Corinth (2 Cor. III, 14) applied the term *Old Testament* to the books that testified to the older compact. Hence when the documents testifying to the new compact were assembled they naturally came to be called the *New Testament.*

Like all the other Bibles of the great religions, with the single exception of the Mohammedan, the Old Testament is a literary growth, covering nearly fifteen centuries and the work of not less than fifty

authors. Of only the *Koran* can it be said that it was "Bible from its birth," for it is claimed that the entire Book was revealed, piecemeal, by Allah direct to Mohammed.

Whoever reads the English Bible simply as a literary product, as part of the great body of English literature, is certain to see that it has a distinct character of its own, and stands in a class by itself. This observed distinctiveness is due not only to the fact that the Bible has always been and still is in many quarters revered as the word of God, but also to the fact that its literary characteristics, its modes of thought, and the purpose of its writings all combine to make the Book demonstrably different from any other in our language. Add to this the sense of unity one gets from realizing that this Book is a summation of the sayings and actions of men in a remote region and age of the world, and no matter how far apart in time these men may be they are thought of as belonging to a single land and to a single wonderful period of human history. Different from each other as are the Old and New Testaments, yet do they run together by reason of many common features. The Christianity of the New Testament is deeply rooted in the Judaism of the Old, and everywhere in both Testaments we find the same moral earnestness and warmth of feeling, the same consciousness of a living God whose attributes are justice and righteousness and love, and in whose service man is to find his highest duty. True, an analysis of its component parts reveals a remarkable variety of literary types

and this tends to obscure its essential unity and to force on our attention the legitimacy of the popular saying that the Bible is "not a book but a library of books." Yet is it as truly a single book as are the works of Shakespeare a single book, though in a different sense. Recall, for example, the rant and bombast that beset us in *Titus Andronicus,* the passionate romance that runs through *Romeo and Juliet,* the philosophies of *Hamlet* and *Lear,* the exquisite charm of the *Winter's Tale.* Yet despite these differences is their underlying unifying character as a revelation of Shakespeare's personality in them all. So with regard to the unity of the Bible. Though the element of personality does not enter, there is nevertheless an indisputable unity of character that warrants our regarding it as a single book.

### (b) The Fifteen Varieties of Old Testament Literature

No other of the sacred books, or Bibles, of the great religions contains so many varieties of literature as does the Old Testament. Fifteen distinct types can be readily discerned. Let us recall them and note briefly the distinctive character of each:

I. As with all other primitive peoples, so with the Hebrews; their earliest products were *war poems, battle odes, folk tales.* Created in an age that knew not writing for *literary* purposes these pieces were transmitted orally for many generations before being finally committed to writing. Happily, within the Old Testament some reminiscences of this oldest

variety of Hebrew literature have been preserved. For example, in Gen. IV, 23-24 is the Sword Song, of Lamech, a war poem in which the bard sets forth the standard of blood revenge which obtained prior to the law of retaliation stated in Exodus XXI and quoted by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount:

SWORD SONG OF LAMECH

Adah and Zillah,
O listen to me!
Ye wives of Lamech,
Give ear to my voice:

For a man I slay,
If a wound I get,
And a youth I kill,
If I am but bruised.

If vengeance for Caen,
Is wreaked sevenfold,
Lamech is avenged
Seventy times and seven.

Another example of this oldest Hebrew literature is the battle ode celebrating the victory of Deborah and Barak over the Canaanites. It is found in the fifth chapter of the book of Judges. A few specimen stanzas as translated by Professor Nathaniel Schmidt will serve to illustrate this type:

THE SONG OF DEBORAH AND BARAK

Unto Yahwe will I sing a song,
Unto Israel's God will I sing.

Rise up, O Deborah, rise,
Arise, sing a song, arise!
Up, Barak, and prisoners take,
Take thy captives, Abinoam's sons.

. . . . . .

Then like heroes the people came down,
Yahwe's people came down like men.
From Ephraim princes came,
After them Benjamin and his clans.

To the battle the kings came down;
Then the kings of Canaan fought.
At Taanach, by Megiddo's waters
No booty of silver they took.

Trodden down were the strongest of men,
Battered by the horses' hoofs,
By the galloping of the steeds,
As they galloped over the heights.

. . . . . .

Perish thine enemies, Yahwe!
Those that love thee shall rise like the sun.

II. Following close upon these primitive productions came a second type of Hebrew literature, namely, *annals,* or brief legendary histories, extending from the earliest times to the beginning of the Hebrew monarchy and including an account of the creation of the world of nature and of man. Two such *annals* lie embedded in the first nine books of the Old Testament. They are called for convenience the "Yahwist" and the "Elohist." The former author was a resident of Judaea, designated the deity by the name *Yahweh,* and wrote in a somewhat colloquial, chatty style. The latter lived in Samaria,

used the name *Elohim* for God and wrote in a more dignified and stately style than did the Yahwist. There were other annals besides these, but only their names have survived; *e.g.,* "the book of Jashar" (Josh. X, 13); "the book of the Wars of the Lord" (Num. XXI, 14); "the book of the Acts of Solomon" (I K. XI, 41); "Chronicles of the Kings of Israel" (I K. XIV, 19).

III. These annals were superseded in the exile by *connected histories* representing a third type of Hebrew literature and exemplified in the First and Second book of Kings, which tell the story of the two monarchies (Israel and Judah) down to the exile in Babylon and by the books of Ezra and Nehemiah which carry Hebrew history on from the return of the exiles to Jerusalem.

IV. A fourth type of Biblical literature is the *legal.* It comprises a series of codes suited to successive stages in the development of the Hebrew people. The earliest of the law-books preserved for us is in chapters XX-XXIII of the Book of "Exodus," and was compiled about the year 800 B.C. Nearly two hundred and fifty years later Chapters XII to XXVI of the Book of "Deuteronomy" constituted a second law book, embodying the religious reforms established by Josiah in the reign of King Hezekiah. Still later, about the middle of the fifth century (450) B.C., when the priesthood was in the ascendant and the new temple worship established, the "priestly" code (preserved in parts of Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers) was added to this legal literature of the nation.

And inasmuch as Moses was looked on as the Great Lawgiver, all of this legal literature, the entire Pentateuch in fact, was ascribed to him. But we now know that Moses was not the author of any of this literature as it stands. How could he have written the eulogy on himself, or the account of his death, recorded in the thirty-fourth chapter of Deuteronomy? How can one harmonize the conflicting legal codes of Exodus, Leviticus, Deuteronomy, if Moses drafted all three? How could he have said in Deuteronomy, that Levites are on a basis of equality with priests, and in Leviticus have accorded them a lower rank? How could he have written two sets of ten commandments differing from each other in several important particulars (Exodus XX and Deut. V)? Why was there no "Levitical" conduct on the part of either priests or people prior to the year 450 B.C. if "Leviticus" was the work of Moses? Would the noblest and most God-fearing men in the nation, such as Hosea and the first Isaiah, have violated the second commandment had they known of its existence? We are forced to conclude that it originated centuries after Moses' day.

In short, a careful study of this legal literature shows that it is *not all of a piece,* but the product of successive stages of Hebrew civilization.

V. In the collection of moral maxims or aphorisms entitled *Proverbs* we recognize a fifth type of Old Testament literature. It owes its lasting hold on human interest to the accuracy and terseness with which it states undisputed judgments on men and

affairs. The Hebrews had no system of organized thought, no metaphysics; their philosophy consisted of detached practical reflections on life, and all these were ascribed to Solomon because of a tradition that he was wise and had propounded enigmas to distinguished guests at his court. But internal evidence proves that the book is a composite work in which several authors, separated by centuries, have had a part. Hence the collection may be split up into sections corresponding to stages in the development of Hebrew civilization. Some of the Proverbs seem to hark back to the primitive period of nomadic life, others to the half century of Babylonian exile, as, for example, "Hope deferred maketh the heart sick." Others, again, (Chap. I to VIII) betoken a time when the "Torah," the Law, had been completed and reverence for it was second only to reverence for Yahweh, *e.g.*—

My son, forget not my law;
But let thy heart keep my commandments:
For length of days, and years of life,
And peace, will they add to thee.
Let not kindness and truth forsake thee:
Bind them about thy neck;
Write them upon the table of thy heart:
So shalt thou find favor and good understanding
In the sight of God and man.
Trust in Yahweh with all thy heart,
In all thy ways acknowledge Him,
And He will direct thy paths. (III, 1 foll.)

VI. The *prophetical books* constitute a sixth in the series of types of Old Testament literature. They

consist of perfervid ethical and religious addresses delivered by men who believed themselves to be the mouthpieces of the Most High. They were not soothsayers, diviners, clairvoyants, necromancers, or trance-speakers. Rather were they the immediate successors of this class in Israel, represented by such men as Nathan, Gad, Samuel. They were not mere *fore*-tellers but *forth*-tellers, *i.e.,* they made predictions, not on the basis of any magic or occult practices, but rather on the basis of a study of existing economic, social, moral and religious conditions, yet all the while believing themselves to be the mouthpieces of the Most High. They pointed to the sacred contract (covenant) that had been made between Yahweh and their great progenitor Abraham, the terms of which had been grossly violated by idolatries and immoralities on the part of the people for whose benefit the covenant had been made. Three of these great moral leaders of the nation laid special stress on this failure of Israel to fulfil their side of the contract. Hosea clothed it in imagery as impressive as it was novel. He likened it to harlotry and found it symbolized by the infidelity of his own wife (Hos. I, 2). Jeremiah, like Hosea, used the marital relation to illustrate the broken compact. He represents Yahweh saying "My covenant they brake, although I was a husband to them" (XXVI, 32). Ezekiel, a captive in Babylon and one of the prophets of the return to Jerusalem, takes the figure used by Hosea and Jeremiah and develops it more fully than either of them. Ezekiel represents Yahweh

recalling the history of the southern kingdom of Judah and likening it to the career of an unfaithful wife. (Ezek. 16. 15.) The Israelites had allowed themselves to imagine that just because the contract had been made, Yahweh would be permanently and inseparably bound up with the people's welfare. The prophets reminded them that their God is above all "the Righteous One" and as such demands righteousness as the *sine quâ non* of divine bounty and protection.

It should be noted that the prophets did not wait to be hired to preach and they could not be bribed to keep still. Their prime function was to call attention to the sacred contract, to the violation of it by the party in whose behalf it was made, and further, to interpret the successes and failures of the nation in terms of the covenant. When prosperity came it meant a fulfilment of Yahweh's promise; when adversity crossed their path it was the sign of failure on the part of the chosen people to fulfil the law of righteousness. At such a time there were those who advocated fleeing to the altar and doubling the sacrifices; but the prophets preached the utter futility and folly of such externalism. They held steadfastly to their conviction that at such times the sole source of safety lies in the practice of ethical religion.

"To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me?" saith Yahweh: "I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and of the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of

lambs, or of he goats. When ye come to the solemn meeting, *who* hath required this at your hand? Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot tolerate it; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. Your new moons and your appointed feasts, my soul hateth: they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them. And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you; yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood. Wash ye, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow." (Is. I. 11 foll.)

"Wherewith shall I come before Yahweh, and bow myself before the high God? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? Will Yahweh be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousand rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?

"He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; for *what* doth Yahweh require of thee but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk in humility before thy God?" (Micah VI, 6-8.)

Thus distinctive of the Hebrew prophets was the triple belief that (a) national misfortune is the product of national sin, (b) a nation morally reprehensible is not worthy to be blessed and (c) repentance is

the only road to redemption and a return of Divine favor. No other nation ever produced an order of prophets. The finest flower of Athenian thought was devoted to philosophy, literature and art. The genius of ancient Rome spent itself in the development of law. But the noblest representatives of Israel were consecrated to the interests of an ethical religion.

Every thoughtful reader of the prophetic books of the Old Testament is certain to be profoundly impressed by three outstanding characteristics of their authors. The first of these is best expressed in terms of Goethe's experience, "When I suffer under the pressure of the finite I take refuge in the Infinite." The finite world pressed upon the prophets in the form of foreign oppression and they sought relief by taking refuge in the Infinite, *i.e.,* in the thought of an Omnipotent God who would one day give the earth and the fulness thereof to the righteous and destroy the wicked. The prophets realized that while subjection to foreign powers had robbed the people of their political independence it nevertheless had deepened their religious consciousness, made them more profoundly aware of the omnipotence of their God and gave them a new sense of themselves as His chosen people, chosen not on their own account, but to serve as His agents in making Him known to all the rest of mankind.

The second of these outstanding characteristics of the prophets is the glow and intensity with which the sense of duty burned in their hearts. Where

shall we look for the like of it? And this characteristic it is that explains the capacity of these men for moral indignation, the august authority with which they speak "as though the Moral Law were uttering itself through them." It explains also the precision with which they pointed to the root-sins of idolatry and unrighteousness, the lightning-stroke with which they smote offenders in every walk of life.

But not only did there burn within the prophets' hearts the sense of duty, there also shone the star of hope, yea, even in the darkest days of national corruption and dissolution. And this must be set down as a third characteristic of the prophets. Nor is there any thing more wonderful and inspiring than the undying faith of these great moral leaders in the coming of a day of better things. Assyria, Egypt, Babylon, Persia, Greece, Rome, each in turn held the Hebrews in subjection, yet never did they lose their grip on the belief that all the nations of the earth would come to the knowledge of Yahweh and His Law and so share the Kingdom He would prepare for His chosen ones.

Amos, though his pronouncements are full of gloom and pessimism, yet has a vision of Israel, sifted as is corn in a sieve, Yahweh suffering not a single grain to fall to the earth (IX, 9). Hosea, the contemporary of Amos, sees the branches of Israel spread their beauty like those of the olive tree and all who dwell under their shade rejoicing in the ways of the Lord (Hos. XIV, 6). The first Isaiah, living in the thick of the Assyrian invasion (722 B.C.) draws a

dark picture of what must follow the corruption of Israel, but beyond the gloom he descries the outline of a regenerated nation ruled by a blameless King in righteousness and in peace (Is. XI, 1-9). Jeremiah, though chastisement is his dominant thought, never believed in the ruin of his people. Rather did he see in the Babylonian Nebuchadnezzar the instrument whereby Yahweh would accomplish His beneficent punishment of a recalcitrant people. Into captivity must they go, but only to be in due time restored to their own land (Jer. XIV, 6). The exilian Isaiah carries the prophetic optimism further still, idealizing Israel as a divinely appointed instrument for the enlightening and healing of the nations. They shall see Jerusalem the capital of a heaven on earth in which all the world will be blessed (Is. LXV, 1, 20-22). Joel and the third Zechariah, living in the period of Greek rule, echo the exalted strain, while the third Isaiah enlarges upon the vision still more, telling of the early appearance of a Davidic King whose dynasty shall last forever and who shall be called "Immanuel, Wonderful, Counsellor, Prince of Peace." (Is. IX, 6.)

VII. A seventh type of Old Testament literature is furnished by the Psalms. They constitute the religious poetry *par excellence* of Judaism, most of it the hymn book of the second temple. Because of a tradition that David was a harpist and a singer of sacred songs the anonymous psalms have all been ascribed to him along with those that bear his name. But the truth is that the Psalter represents a poetic

religious literature covering four centuries, from the sixth to the third inclusive, B.C, references in the text enabling us to identify the periods to which most of them belong. For instance, one of the most touching of the entire collection was composed by a poet during the exile in Babylon, as the content plainly indicates:

By the rivers of Babylon,
There we sat down, yea, we wept
When we remembered Zion.
Upon the willows in the midst thereof
We hanged up our harps.
For there they that had led us captive required of us songs, saying:
Sing us one of the songs of Zion!
*How* shall we sing for them Yahweh's song
In a foreign land?

Similarly we identify the seventy-ninth psalm as belonging to the Maccabean era, when the Syrian Greeks profaned the temple and citizens of Jerusalem suffered as never before:

O God, foreigners are come into thine inheritance;
Thy holy temple have they defiled;
They have laid Jerusalem in heaps.
The dead bodies of thy servants have they given to be food unto the birds of the heavens,
The flesh of thy saints unto the beasts of the earth.
Their blood have they shed like water round about Jerusalem;
And there was none to bury them.
We are become a reproach to our neighbors,
A scoffing and derision to them that are round about us.
How long, O Yahweh? wilt thou be angry forever?

VIII. The book of Lamentations constitutes an eighth variety of Old Testament literature. It is a powerful, poetic dirge in five parts, bewailing the fall of Jerusalem. A threnody it is, over the destruction of the city in 586 B.C. It was ascribed to Jeremiah because he had suffered so over that calamity which he predicted, but the context plainly shows that these elegies are not his because they express a tone of bitter surprise that Jerusalem should have fallen, whereas Jeremiah saw it coming and near at hand.

"How deserted is the city that once was full of people! She that was great amongst peoples is now like a widow. She who was a princess amongst the provinces is now a vassal. The city that was called the perfection of beauty, the joy of all the earth, is covered now with scorn. The travellers that see her ruin shake their heads upon her. Yahweh in his wrath has covered the daughter of Zion with a cloud, cast down the glory of Israel from heaven to earth." (Lam. I, 1; II, 1-15.)

In the fifth elegy of the book of Lamentations the poet mourns over the long continuance of Judah's misery. "Why should'st thou utterly forget us, O Yahweh, and forsake us for so long a time?" (V, 20.) "Bring us back to thyself and restore us, O Yahweh. Renew our days as of old. For why should'st thou utterly forsake us and be angry with us beyond measure?" (V, 21-22.)

IX. Even *romance literature* has a place in the Old Testament—witness the story of Ruth the Moabitess,

who persisted in accompanying Naomi, her mother-in-law, back to her home at Bethlehem in spite of her protestations. How exquisitely touching is the devotion and loyalty of Ruth!

"And Ruth said to Naomi her mother-in-law, Entreat me not to leave thee, and to return from following after thee; for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God; where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried; naught but death shall part thee and me (Ruth I, 16-17). David had Moabite blood in his veins (I Sam. XII, 3-4) and the author wrote the story to ennoble his ancestry. Ruth's son, Obed, was the father of Jesse and Jesse was the father of David.

X. A tenth type is represented by the book of Job, a composite work of unknown authors who flourished in the fourth century before our era. *Philosophical poetry* it is, as distinguished from the religious poetry seen in the Psalms. So long as the human mind spends itself in wrestling with the problem of evil, or in attempting to justify the ways of God to man, so long will the story of Job continue to occupy the chief place among the records of that age-long struggle. The poet leaves the problem unsolved on the ground that the ways of God are beyond man's power to understand.

"Then Job answered the Lord: I know Thou canst do
all things
And that no purpose of thine can be restrained.
Therefore have I uttered that which I understood not

Wherefore I retract my words and repent in dust and ashes." (Job XLII, 123-6)

XI. *Lyrical love poetry,* an eleventh variety, is represented by "Canticles," or the "Song of Songs," or the "Song of Solomon," and was used at wedding festivals in which the bride and groom are feasted for a week with many songs sung in praise of their beauty and prowess. This explains the unrestrained fervor of the poems. For centuries it has been the custom of the Christian Church to interpret the *Song of Songs* symbolically and the headings in the King James version follow this custom. But recent scholarship has recognized these warm and vigorous lyrics as expressions of an earthly love. Such spiritual meanings as have been given them must first be read *into* the songs before they can be taken out. Professor James Moffatt's translation (February, 1928) elucidates the secular and sensuous character of this poetry. That Solomon was not the author of these love-lyrics is inferred from the conviction that his vanity would never have allowed him to represent himself as an unsuccessful suitor, and we are therefore persuaded that he was not the author of them. Besides, the songs contain Persian and Greek words which were wholly beyond his ken.

"Says the Maiden to the youth
Kiss me with kisses from your mouth,
for your love is better than wine;
the fragrance of your ointment is sweet;

Your very self is a precious ointment;
therefore do the maidens love you.
Take me along with you, let us hasten;
bring me, O king, into your chamber,
That we may exult and rejoice in you,
that we may praise your love more than wine;
rightly are you loved."

But not even a king's love can annihilate the maiden's devotion to her shepherd lover, and hence the poem is not the work of Solomon.

XII. Perhaps the least appreciated and most misunderstood of Old Testament books is that entitled *Jonah*. Yet it is an outstanding example of a twelfth type, namely *ethical fiction*. An imaginary story embodying great ethical ideals, it breathes a broad and lofty religious sentiment, representing God as bringing home to the hero the great moral truth that if you flee from duty you are swallowed up in a sea of trouble; go back to your obligations and you land on the shore of inner peace and self-respect. It is the tragedy of the book of Jonah that it should contain sublime ethical messages and yet be known to people generally only because of its connection with a whale.

XIII. In striking contrast to the book of Jonah is the book of Esther, which is also a work of fiction written during the period of Syrian Greek oppression about the middle of the second century. To this thirteenth type the name *festal fiction* may be given because the story was written to commend the feast of "Purim" which commemorates a great national

deliverance in the time of Xerxes. The book breathes an intense fiery nationalism, as contrasted with the cosmopolitanism of the book of Jonah.

XIV. While Judas Maccabeus was valiantly wrestling with Syrian-Greek oppression, an unknown writer produced the outstanding example of an Apocalypse or Revelation—the book of Daniel, a fourteenth variety of Old Testament literature and a product of Greek oppression. It was born of the old prophetic hope of the establishment of Israel in its own land under its own rulers, and the triumph of Yahweh's religion over all the nations of the earth. The word *Apocalypse* derives from the Greek αποκαλυπτειν, *to take off the cover,* hence *to reveal.* The book of Daniel is thus a revelation of the author's prophetic expectations for the future of his country and his people, to enhearten them under the stress of terrible persecutions instituted by the Syrian Greek, Antiochus Epiphanes.

In a vision of the four beasts,—symbolic of the empires of Assyria, Babylonia, Persia, Greece, the author announces that the terrible tribulations of the Jews under Greek Syrian domination will soon end.

Daniel can be dated more definitely than any other Old Testament book. It comes out of the year 164 B.C. when the Jews had been saved from extinction by the miraculous victories of Judas Maccabeus and the temple had just been rededicated after the shocking desecration perpetrated by the Syrian Greek ruler.

XV. Over against the optimism of the author of

Daniel stands the pessimism of the author of the book entitled *Ecclesiastes,* a fifteenth type of Hebrew literature in the Old Testament,—*philosophical prose.* Here Solomon is figured as renouncing the world and turning preacher—Ecclesiastes—the Greek equivalent for the Hebrew *Koheleth.* The chapters read like a note book in which the sage has set down his meditations and observations on life as they happened to come to him. He occasionally uses proverbs as a text on which to hang his own ideas. It is a negative and indifferentistic attitude to life that the author takes and it is not impossible that his work reflects the influence of the Cynic philosophy which, just before his day, had been firmly established in Egypt. The book seems to have been written about the year 200 B.C. and represents the views of a small Jewish circle imbued with this species of Greek philosophic thought. Very unsatisfactory is the author's attempted combination of theistic faith and practical skepticism, for the former should have generated a cheerfulness and hope as it did among his ancestors the prophets, whereas he finds nothing in the world worthy of whole-souled devotion. His highest ethical reach is that of enjoying what he can and refraining from futile longings and hopes. "All things," he says, "come alike to all." Man knows not his time but is caught like birds in a snare. "The wise man's eyes are in his head; but the fool walketh in darkness: and I myself perceived also that one event happeneth to them all. Then said I in my heart, As it hap-

peneth to the fool, so it happeneth even unto me; and why was I then more wise? Then I said in my heart, that this also is vanity, for there is no remembrance of the wise more than of the fool for ever; seeing that which now is in the days to come shall all be forgotten. And how dieth the wise man? as the fool." (II, 14-16). And when Ecclesiastes counsels putting forth intense energy it is in the belief that man has no second life. "Whatever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might, for there is no work nor device nor knowledge nor wisdom in Sheol whither thou goest." (IX, 10.) These quotations indicate the manner in which a Jew tinged with Greek skeptical philosophy was holding on to his ancestral faith in God and righteousness and was yet persuaded of the ephemeral character of all earthly interests and pleasures.

Thus throughout the fifteen centuries in the course of which the Israelites emerged from nomadic to urban life and achieved a highly developed civilization, there was produced this wealth of Old Testament literature unmatched in its variety by any other of the sacred scriptures of the world.

At one of the early councils of the Christian Church it was moved to eliminate the Old Testament and make the Christian Bible consist of the New Testament alone. But the motion was lost. Think what an utter, irretrievable spiritual misfortune would have followed had the motion carried! For, in that case, the Christian scriptures would have been robbed not only of the finest of the

Psalms, but also of that ethical message of the Prophets which ranks among the supreme and permanent spiritual assets of the race.

Without fear of contradiction it may be said that as long as man lives on this planet, they who wish to make progress in the upper zones of their being must turn to Israel for inspiration, to those psalmists, poets and prophets of the Old Testament who saw in righteousness the very core of religion and who held with unceasing and unflagging zeal the mighty expectation of a coming Commonwealth of Man.

Alas, this variegated literature is not arranged in chronological order so that reading the succession of books as they stand gives one no orderly, continuous presentation of the development of Hebrew history or legislation, morals or religion. It is as though several hundred loose sheets of manuscript had fallen from a desk and, scattered over the floor, were then picked up at random and bound in the order in which they were gathered together. Or we might compare the present arrangement of Old Testament books to the strata of the earth's crust which by geological upheavals or cataclysms lost their original position and relation and now appear in anything but chronological order. So in these scriptures, layer under layer of mental deposit appears, but the transformations of the records perceived in these deposits are analogous to the physical to which the rock-records of the earth have been subjected. There is much derangement and blending of unrelated parts, a literary metamorphosis.

And precisely as through the science of geology we have learned how the earth was formed and how to marshal the successive living forms that appeared on it, so by the aid of constructive criticism we are learning how the Bible-books came into being and how to marshal in chronological order the succession of ideas and events in Bible-lands; how to differentiate myth from legend and both from history, the probable from the proven.

And if it be asked how this literary chaos ever came to be such, the answer is, in the first place, that in ancient Palestine literary ownership did not have the significance attaching to it that it has with us. Manuscripts were often written with neither date nor author's name, and sometimes even without as much as a title to serve as a superscription. Consequently editors combined anonymous scrolls of a prophet, or a poet, on the ground that they seemed to resemble each other. The books of Proverbs, Zechariah, the Psalms, Isaiah, are examples of such editing, each a composite work, as we now know, two or more centuries separating sections of each of these books. In the second place parchment was very expensive, causing many a scribe, on the ground of sheer economy, to copy on a single parchment scroll all that he could, with an eye only to the similarity of thought he saw in the several originals believed to be all of a piece. Thirdly, the compilers of the books that make up the Old Testament were not at all concerned to secure a chronological arrangement. They grouped the whole collection

according to the traditional plan—"The Law" (Pentateuch), "the Prophets," and the "Writings." In other words, interest in the evolutionary point of view did not control editors in Biblical times, and the present literary chaos was the result.

If we recall certain of the axioms (self-evident truths) of literary development we shall remove many a perplexity created by reading *consecutively* the Old Testament books in their traditional order. For instance, from the axiom that *wandering shepherds will not anticipate legislation for settled farmers,* it follows that the great law-books (Exodus, Leviticus and Deuteronomy) were written only after the entry of the Israelites into Canaan, when agricultural as contrasted with nomadic life began. Again the axiom that *people living a nomadic life are in no condition to receive literary culture* assures us there was no writing for literary purposes prior to Moses' day (1300 B.C.). Moreover, as the *acquisition of literary ability by a nomadic people becoming urbanized takes time,* it follows that no literary work was done prior to David's day (1000 B.C.).* Once more, there is the axiom that *a man of many wives and many Gods would not be the author of books which assume monogamy and monotheism.* Consequently David did not write the Psalms, nor Solomon the books of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes.† Add to these and other inferences logically drawn

* The earliest reference to writing in the Old Testament is David's letter to Joab (II Sam. XI, 14).

† II Sam. V, 13; I K. XII; Prov. XXXI, 10; Ps. CXXVIII, 3; I Sam. XXVI, 19.

from axioms of literary development, the invaluable and incalculable service rendered by what is known as the higher criticism in determining the date, genuineness and authenticity of Bible books; criticism that is scholarly and constructive. Conducted *above* the plane of unwarranted presuppositions and preconceptions, reverent withal, the higher criticism has contributed immensely toward intelligent and appreciative understanding of Biblical literature. In the light of the services this illuminator has rendered, such a popular brochure as Colonel Ingersoll's "Mistakes of Moses" were better entitled "The Mistakes of Robert Ingersoll." For no scholar today would think of attributing to Moses any of the "mistakes" with which the humorous but unscholarly monograph charges the great Hebrew liberator and legislator. In making this criticism I would not be unmindful of the great service Ingersoll rendered to religion. Remembering the particular period in which his work was done—those decades of fierce controversy over issues now dead beyond all possibility of resuscitation—we must gratefully acknowledge that no other man of his time did so much to help the faith of the past on to the faith of the future. On the other hand, it is equally pertinent to observe that, had his scholarship matched his wit, the Biblical criticism in which he indulged would have escaped classification with that of his spiritual ancestors the French Encyclopaedists. The criticism which lacks historical perspective, which accepts myths and legends as literal facts, which assumes

that the Pentateuch was the work of Moses because his name appears at the head of the first page, which asks no questions as to the origin, date, genuineness, authenticity and the *tendenz* of the books to be criticized—such criticism is properly designated "lower" as compared to that which rises to the plane where full cognizance is taken of these fundamental prerequisites for judging Bible-books.

What a real spiritual gain it is, thanks to the higher criticism, to have our conception of God relieved of the severe strain put upon it by narratives accepted as authentic till the higher criticism explained their origin and growth—God commanding Abraham to slay his son Isaac, God ordering Samuel to "hew Agag in pieces" and bidding Moses "despoil the Egyptians" of their jewelry—injunctions now known to be part of the legendary lore of a semi-civilized people not yet emerged from fetichism and the crudest anthropomorphic theism. What a relief to learn that the first chapter of Genesis is a religious poem not a scientific treatise, the product of an exilian Hebrew genius who revamped the cosmology of his Babylonian contemporaries! What an advantage to know that the narratives of Eden and the flood represent primitive attempts at solving the problems of sin and retribution; that the story of Jonah is not history, but romance, designed to teach ethical truths of paramount importance for us no less than for the Jews of Ptolemy's time! What a help it is to know that we need not apologize for the character of the deity described in the eighth chapter

of Jeremiah, nor defend the imprecations recorded in the sixty-ninth psalm!

Worthy of note it is that the higher criticism has had among its leading expositors, both at home and abroad, clergymen of various Christian persuasions who felt no compunction about retaining their posts and whose right to remain where they were has never been invaded. Canon Cheyne of Rochester Cathedral, England; Canon Driver of Christ Church, Oxford; the Presbyterian Doctors of Divinity, Bruce and Davidson in Scotland; in our own country the Episcopalian, J. P. Peters; the Presbyterian, Francis Brown; the Congregationalist, George F. Moore. These men did not profane the Bible when they banished a superstitious reverence for it, brought order out of chaos, arranged the books in their chronological order and interpreted what had long been obscure or meaningless. On the contrary they rendered an illuminating service the beneficent reaction of which on the religious nature has already made itself felt wherever the achievements of the higher criticism are known. It has enabled us to see, as never before, the divine element in the Bible by the appeal which it makes to what is divine in us, the thumb-prints and the penciled passages proving the continued power of the Bible to satisfy the heart, to comfort its sorrows, calm its tempests and fill its emptiness with a message of courage and of hope.

## CHAPTER VIII

## THE BIBLE OF CHRISTIANITY

### (a) The Threefold Version of the Gospel

ALTHOUGH the Old Testament constitutes part of the Christian Bible, its distinctive portion is the New. The obvious and inseparable relation of the older dispensation to the later led to its inclusion in the Christian Canon. The New Testament, like the Old, is not a book, but a collection of books. Four distinct types of literature characterize the collection.

1. Biographical—the Gospels or the Gospel in fourfold form.
2. Historical—the Acts (activities) of the Apostles.
3. Epistolary—Twenty-one Letters, fourteen ascribed to the Apostle Paul and seven others.
4. Apocalyptic—the Revelation of St. John the Divine.

And precisely as in the case of the Old Testament its fifteen varieties of literature are unified by the Hebraic thread that runs through them all, so the four diverse New Testament types are made one by the clear and vivid image they leave on the reader's mind of Jesus' personality. The Gospel is given the first place in the collection because it is the groundwork of the whole. All of these writings are logically but not chronologically arranged in the canon and all of them were written between the years 52

(the probable date of the first Epistle to the Thessalonians) and 150 (the date generally assigned to the Second Epistle of Peter). But though all these constituent parts of the New Testament had been written by the middle of the second century, they were not immediately gathered into the authoritative collection, or canon, as we now have it. And the reason was that many similar writings had been produced during that period and with a claim to recognition as of equal worth with the others. *Gospels,* such as "the Gospel according to the Egyptians" and that "according to the Hebrews"; *Acts,* like "the Acts of Paul and Tecla," "the Acts of Andrew," "the Acts of Peter"; *Epistles,* such as those of "Barnabas" and of "Clement"; *Apocalypses,* like those of "Peter" and of "James." Add to these the many "Apologia" or Defenses of Christianity against Jewish and Gentile critics, like that of Justin; the *Manuals* of discipline and of ritual, like the *"Didache."* In other words, by the year 150 a great mass of Christian literature had been published from which the books constituting the New Testament canon, as we know it, were eventually selected. And the selection was determined, not by a vote of the Church at a Council meeting, but by the gradual approximation of the churches to a common usage. For reasons not always clear to us certain writings won for themselves an esteem and usage not accorded to others and so were included in the common collection, or canon. Generally speaking, apostolic origin, or apostolic relationship was the test of admission to the canon.

As late as the year 350 the New Testament included the two books *Shepherd of Hermas* and the *Epistle of Barnabas,* as we see in the "Sinaitic" manuscript —the oldest extant manuscript of the New Testament. It was at the instigation of the great Augustine, Bishop of Hippo, in North Africa, that in 393, the present canon of twenty-seven books was adopted. This, however, regulated only the usage of churches in a particular territory and though Pope Gelasius, in 495, decreed that this canon be accepted by the whole Church, it was not until the Council of Trent, in 1546, that the final decree was issued, fixing the canon as we know it today.

As long as men had Jesus among them he was their authority; after his death it was the *oral* tradition of his words to which they turned. For he himself had left no written record to posterity, nor was he attended by an amanuensis, as was Mohammed, whose beloved disciple, Abu Bekr, jotted down the words of the prophet the moment they were spoken.

When, after Jesus' death, his disciples returned to Jerusalem from Galilee, whither they had fled, terrorized by his arrest in the Garden of Gethsemane, then it was that this oral tradition of his life and teaching began to take shape. For at least ten years after his death all that was known of him was transmitted by word of mouth, because it was believed he would soon return from heaven to earth to fulfil the function of Messiah and therefore the writing of any account of him and his work seemed superfluous. But when month after month, year after

year elapsed with no sign of his reappearance (Luke XIV, 21; XIX, 11-12; II Peter III) it became evident that the sense of certitude attaching to oral reports would weaken and vanish and no one would be present who could testify to the correctness of what was quoted. It is to this critical period that the genesis of the gospel story in *written* form reverts; a time when the Old Testament was not yet called "Old" because it was the only existing Testament; a time when the bond of union in the primitive Christian churches was not a book, nor a creed, nor a formula, but simply following Jesus; a time when, transcending all thought of church organization, ritual and doctrine, men's minds were preoccupied with the "parousia," the second coming of Jesus; a time when the idea of a *canon* of Christian scriptures had not yet taken hold of Jesus' followers.

As the circle of his disciples grew smaller and the hope of his return weaker, there arose the spontaneous impulse to write down all that could be remembered of his life and teaching. And this impulse was considerably strengthened by the need of the infant churches for material in instructing converts on the life and message of Jesus. Doubtless it was to this that the author of the third gospel referred in his preface. He says that various attempts had been made to reduce the oral tradition to writing, but as these were defective he proposed "to set in order and accurately," for the sake of the convert, Theophilus, all that had been handed down from apostolic eye and ear witnesses (Lk. I, 1-4). It would

seem that at first little compilations were made of Jesus' sayings. This is what we learn from Papias who was bishop of the Phrygian diocese in Asia Minor about 120. He tells of such compilations, written in Aramaic (the language Jesus spoke) and called *Logia Jesu,* sayings of Jesus. In the natural process of literary development this collection of "sayings" would be provided with headings and set in a frame of history and one of the Greek translations of this Aramaic Gospel, in all probability, became the ancestor of our present Gospel "according to Matthew," compiled about the year 80 for Greek-speaking Jewish converts and deriving its name perhaps from the fact that it incorporated Matthew's *Logia.*

To supplement and complement this gospel of the "sayings" there was written a gospel of the *doings,* the narrative of Jesus' mission. When and by whom this original gospel of the doings was written we do not know but the second book in the New Testament canon is a lineal descendant thereof.

The author of "the Gospel according to Mark" seems to have had access to first-hand reminiscences of Jesus, for Papias tells us that Mark (whom we meet in the book of "The Acts of the Apostles," as a companion of Paul and Barnabas and later as traveling companion with Peter) "wrote down all that he remembered of what Peter had told him concerning Jesus," and that he "took pains to omit nothing and to make no false statement."

Thus the Papian tradition connects the second

gospel directly with Mark and indirectly with his companion Peter. It was written earlier than the Matthew gospel, because the author of the latter plainly drew on the Marcan gospel for much of his material. And Mark's gospel was probably given its name because of the large place given in it to Mark's "recollections" of what he heard from Peter. And he, a Galilean fisherman, knowing only his native Aramaic, must when he went outside of Palestine, have had an interpreter and in that capacity the Greek-speaking Mark served him.

Thus the story of the genesis of the first three gospels, as we have them, resolves itself into the following: About the year 70 one, John Mark, undertook to give formal shape to the "reminiscences" he had received from the disciple Peter. During the next decade this condensed chronicle, dealing for the most part with Jesus' deeds (as distinguished from his sayings) was considerably enlarged and enriched by other tradition, more especially the *Logia Jesu,* transmitted from the notes of the disciple Matthew, and incorporated into the narrative of the Matthean gospel. Some twenty years later one, Luke, carefully sifted the material at his disposal, fragmentary and imperfect as it was, and enriched the story further still by elements not included in the two preceding biographies. Thus by the year 110 A.D. at least three attempts had been made at reducing to written form a connected narrative of the tradition concerning Jesus. And all three, though readily differentiated, resemble each other to such a degree that Griesbach,

in 1774, named them "the Synoptic Gospels" to indicate the fact of parallel passages and the common view of Jesus' life and work taken by all three.

From what has been thus far said it is plain that the Synoptics are not the work of eye and ear witnesses; rather are they compilations, edited, with varying degrees of skill. Indeed they may be likened to palimpsests, for, when critically examined, it appears that the surface-record presents Jesus as the Messiah, the Son of God, the Wonder-Worker and Saviour; conceived of the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, crucified for mens' sins and raised from the dead; while below this later account of him may be discerned the outlines of a more human, but not less majestic figure, the prophet of Nazareth whose character and teaching were such as to warrant identifying the Christian movement with his name. And the effect of this reading of the Synoptics as a palimpsest—an older tradition underlying the text of the later—has been to strengthen and deepen our assurance that an historical nucleus lies embedded in the gospels and that Jesus of Nazareth was an historical personage. In no other way can the belief which prevailed in the early church, the belief in a crucified Messiah, be accounted for except on the hypothesis of the crucifixion of a real man who was believed by his immediate followers to be the Messiah. Moreover, this palimpsest-view of the Synoptics shows us that the courageous opposition of Jesus to the conservative religious leaders of Judaism, his free, fearless criticism of the Law and the temple-

ritual, his frank association with the socially ostracized, his ardent confidence in the coming of the Kingdom of Heaven on earth, his clear-cut distrust of political Messianism, explain adequately and fully the actions of both his enemies and of his friends, as well as his own death together with the inscription on the cross that falsely represented him as having royal aspirations. And the more fundamentally the older tradition differs from that of the evangelistic record the greater our warrant for trusting it. Furthermore, this same palimpsest viewpoint shows that while Jesus shared the general apocalyptic view of history current in his day, the essentials of his ethical and religious teaching were independent of the apocalyptic form into which he threw his outlook upon the future.

Finally, with regard to the first three gospels it should be noted that prior to the production of these documentary sources for the life and work of Jesus is the hypothetical document to which Wellhausen gave the conventional symbol "Q" for a name (Quelle, source). It comprises all the matter common to the gospels of Matthew and Luke but not found in Mark and remains the earliest and best authority we have for the story of Jesus. And while there is as yet no unanimity among scholars as to its authorship, there is no question of its existence or of the date of its composition as between the years 35 and 55.

Clearly then we know not who the authors of the first three gospels were nor the exact dates to be

assigned them. We know only that they are of comparatively late origin, ranging from the year 70 to 100 and giving evidence of influences at work that colored and sometimes even distorted the original tradition. Chief among such influences was the belief that Jesus was the Messiah and that, as such, he would prove himself the long-looked-for political vice-regent of God on earth. In this Messianic mould the three Gospels were shaped. Another such influence, serving to color and modify the original tradition, was the belief that the Hebrew prophets had foretold all the essential details of Messiah-Jesus' life. Hence the turning to the Old Testament for prophetic pronouncements of reported incidents and the deliberate creation of incidents to conform to passages of prophecy supposed to have reference to him, notably in the narratives of his birth. Small wonder then that skepticism should have been generated as to the trustworthiness of the Gospel-record and the quest for the original words of Jesus pursued with unabated zeal, tireless patience and deathless hope. It would carry us altogether too far afield to deal with the problem the distrust has raised. Suffice it to say that a cumulative argument has been built up in support of the thesis that if we cannot be sure we have the exact words of Jesus we do approximate the original closely enough to feel sure we have the actual substance of his message.*

* For a detailed discussion of the grounds upon which the belief in the reliability of the record is based the reader is referred to the chapter bearing that title in the author's "Dawn of Christianity," a sequel to his "Life of Jesus in the Light of the Higher Criticism."

Worthy of particular note it is that each of the Synoptic Gospels was known in the early churches not as the work of a named author, but as the Gospel *according* to Matthew, Mark, Luke, respectively —a form of title that says nothing as to authorship, but simply names the apostolic sponsor supposed to be back of the particular version of the Gospel. In other words, for the Synoptists the Gospel was all in all and they were not so presumptuous as to speak of themselves as authors of the Gospel. Each version has its own peculiar merit; that according to Mark, letting us see Jesus moving and acting and making his own impression on us; the Matthean, letting Jesus speak out of his active life and his contacts with the people about him; the version indeed, of one, formerly a Jew, keenly conscious of the connection of his adopted faith with Judaism, the divinely intended outcome of it, hinted in a hundred passages or more; the Lucan version seeking to commend the Gospel to the Gentile world, because for him it was nothing short of a universal religion.

### (b) The Fourth Gospel

Towards the middle of the second century the Synoptic story took on fresh elements and it was given fresh interpretation to make it intelligible and appealing to prospective Greek-speaking and Greek-thinking converts to Christianity—a re-interpretation wholly foreign to Palestinian Jewish modes of thought. The practical ethics of Jesus, his concrete eschatology, his gospel of philanthropy and the con-

ception of him as the Messiah, all underwent rehabilitation in terms of Greek metaphysical thought. And this re-presentation of what we read in the Synoptic gospels took its place in the New Testament canon as the Fourth Gospel. There it is called "the Gospel according to St. John." But no where in its pages is there a hint of authorship. In the closing chapter, (XXI, 21-24) a supplement to the gospel, it is declared that "the beloved disciple" was witness for the material of "these things" and indeed "wrote these things." This beloved disciple is, however, in no way and by no word identified. Second century speculation decided that John, the son of Zebedee, was meant and so the book came to be known as "the Gospel according to John." Yet certain it is that this Gospel was not written by the disciple whose name it bears and with whose character the Synoptics have acquainted us. There he appears as an illiterate fisherman, a man of intemperate zeal, a "son of thunder!" How could such a man have been the author of a gospel rooted in Greek metaphysics, in Alexandrian philosophy, written in Greek and in a style such as only a cultivated and erudite writer could command? Again, we know that this Gospel was not written by any Palestinian Jew of the first century, because it shows an unfamiliarity with places and customs that would have been impossible for a native Jew. No, the author was a Hellenist, *i.e.,* a Jew born and reared outside Palestine. That he was a Jew is evidenced (a) by his use of such terms as *sabbaoth* and *Messiah,*

(b) by his belief that "salvation is of the Jews" (IV, 22), (c) by his view of the Pentateuch as a book of prophecy (X, 25), and, (d) by his holding of the Old Testament in such esteem as no born Gentile could have entertained. It is simply impossible to ascribe "apostolic" authorship to the Fourth Gospel for no disciple of Jesus could have survived long enough into the second century to make possible the presentation of the Gospel story in so thoroughly Hellenistic a form or have entered so fully into the spirit and substance of Greek Alexandrian thought. The last chapter, to which reference has just been made, contains the passage (XXI, 24) inserted for the purpose of claiming the Gospel for "the beloved disciple" whom tradition has identified (but without scriptural warrant) as John. Hence traditionally the work became known as "the Gospel according to St. John," but since it originally appeared in anonymity and its author is unidentifiable, we speak of it as the Fourth Gospel. All the evidence we have points to a Greek Jew, possibly a resident of Ephesus, as its author, and to the year 120 as approximately the date of its composition.

Every thoughtful reader is certain to be impressed by the many and radical differences between it and the Synoptic Gospels. Clement of Alexandria, writing about the year 200, was among the first to give expression to the contrast. For him Matthew, Mark and Luke were "the body of the Gospel" and later, he said, "John wrote a spirit-Gospel," meaning thereby to state the difference between facts and

their spiritual significance. What transpired in Jesus' life and ministry was fact; the spiritual interpretation of it all is spirit and the Fourth Gospel is a great spiritual interpretation of what the Gospel of Jesus meant for thoughtful Greek-speaking people in the first quarter of the second century. As a record of fact it has very little in common with the Synoptics for its author sought to set forth, under the guise of narrative, the essential spiritual substance of the Gospel as he understood it.

The far-reaching differences that separate the Synoptics from this fourth version of the Gospel are seen first of all in the portraiture of Jesus presented by each. A comparison of the two portraits shows that they are not of the same person, though they use the same name. The one is distinctly that of an historical character; the other is an impersonation of a theological idea. The two portraits have been compared to those of Socrates, by Plato and Xenophon respectively, but the comparison does not hold because the two writers delineate the same person; their accounts of Socrates are complementary, whereas the Synoptics and the Fourth Gospel depict different persons, though bearing the same name; the two biographies are not complementary but largely antithetical and tend to neutralize each other.

The Jesus of the Synoptics is essentially human, his lineage is traced to David, he is baptized in the Jordan along with other people; he is tempted to forsake his calling, which temptation imputed to him a human nature on any interpretation; he enters on

the work of healing and preaching; his subject is the coming Kingdom of God and how to prepare for entrance into it when it comes; his ministry culminates in a crucifixion steeped in agony of body and mind and the thought of it turns the last supper into a funeral feast.

The Jesus of the Fourth Gospel is not the Man of Nazareth but the Logos, (or Word) made flesh, a conception which the author derived directly from the writings of the Alexandrian Jewish philosopher Philo (who died 41 A.D.) and indirectly from Egyptian and other oriental speculation, all of which is seen reflected in the opening verses of the first chapter (the prologue). There the creation of the world is described as the work of the Logos, or Word, an emanation from God, empowered not only to assume the task of world-creation but also of illuminating every soul born into the world. "In the beginning was the Logos (or Word), and the Word was God" and "it became flesh" in order that "God, whom no one had seen at any time, might be made manifest."

In a brief prologue of eighteen verses, corresponding to the *choragus* of a Greek drama, we are made acquainted with this fundamental conception of the author, essential to the understanding of what is to follow, the Logos and its incarnation. After this prefatory prologue, the hero of the drama, the incarnate Logos, passes before us in a succession of cardinal situations, the whole comprised in a series of five acts.

In Act I (chapp. I-IV) the Logos—Jesus enters as the Light-bringer, all men welcoming the Light and responding to it.

In Act II (chapp. V-VI) signs of hostility to the Light appear; men take sides for and against the Light.

In Act III (chapp. VII-XII) enemies of the Light are in the majority. Only a very small group rally round the hero and are drawn closer to him as the drama proceeds.

Act IV (chapp. XIII-XVII) shows the hero left alone with these bosom friends; he reveals to them his inmost convictions.

In Act V (chapp. XVIII-XX) the Light is overwhelmed by the powers of darkness, only however to rise triumphant and victorious.

With this Light, the Logos, our author identifies the Synoptic Jesus. The "Word" is "made flesh" for two and a half years in his person. Thus while the Synoptics portray a human Jesus, sympathetically in touch with the physically and morally diseased, the Fourth Gospel presents a mysterious Divine being, aloof from lepers and demons, in touch with only the spiritually elite. No one but He could say "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." The Jesus of the Synoptics says to his disciples, "Ye are the light of the world," the Logos-Jesus of the Fourth Gospel says, "I am the Light of the world." The former speaks of immortality, the latter says, "I am the resurrection and the life." The Jesus of the Synoptics offers terms of salvation purely ethical—"The

tree is known by its fruits"; the Jesus of the Fourth Gospel imposes a theological test "belief on Him whom God hath sent." The Jesus of the Synoptics preached a Sermon on the Mount and spoke in parables on practical issues in the conduct of life; the Jesus of the Fourth Gospel preaches no such sermon, uses no such parables, but, on the contrary, delivers discourses that are elaborate, involved and concerned with the dignity, glory and Divine origin of the speaker, the Logos-Jesus.

We open the Fourth Gospel and at once we are ushered into the presence of an Associate of God, the Logos or Word, who has lived for aeons before the birth of the Synoptic Jesus; One who was "before David and Abraham," yea, before the creation of the world. And this Being, the Logos, or Word, becomes man, but is not born, has no mortal pedigree and is an altogether different personality from the Jesus of the Synoptic Gospels. These, and perhaps also other Gospels, lay before the author of the Fourth Gospel and in entire harmony with the Philonic conception and the allegorizing method of which Philo was an outstanding master, the Synoptic record was rewritten, all its contents treated with sovereign freedom; that which failed to fit in with the Logos conception was discarded and considerable new material introduced to enhance the presentation of the hero.

Given the identification of the primordial emanation from God, the Logos or Word, with the historic Jesus; given the conception of him as "the Word

made flesh" and we understand at once why so much of the biographical material found in the Synoptics is absent from the Fourth Gospel, notably the parts relating to Jesus' birth, baptism, temptation and transfiguration. According to the author of this Gospel, Jesus as God incarnate, as the Word made flesh, could not have been born; he was "begotten" not created; an emanation from God, taking on human form without parturition. He could not have been baptized, as he was "full of grace and truth" already. A ceremony of consecration was in his case superfluous, being Himself the source, not an object, of consecration. Again, he could not have been tempted in as much as he was the stainless instrument of God, an intermediary, not to be even imagined as "wrestling with Satan," since his original sinlessness precluded all possibility of spiritual struggle. Similarly, he could not have been transfigured because he was "before Abraham" and "one with the Father," hence wholly independent of "the Law and the Prophets." For him the cross was the symbol of honor by which he was lifted up that he might draw all men unto him. Moreover, his surrender was voluntary and his humanity temporary, therefore for him was no agony in Gethsemane, no suffering on the cross, no prayer that "the cup might pass." Not for him was it to deal with demons or with lepers, for the Logos-Jesus can have no contact with what is unclean. Why should he utter a cry of God-forsakenness on the cross, or even suffer any agony in the Garden when his humanity was only

temporary and the crucifixion but a step to the heavenly throne from which he came?

In such wise did the author of the Fourth Gospel deal with the records before him, reading into them his philosophy of the Logos and producing a new life of Jesus in terms of that philosophy, albeit one that while it may preserve certain traditions that have a basis in fact, (such as the story of the woman of Samaria and that of the woman taken in adultery), yet cannot serve as an authoritative source of information concerning Jesus of Nazareth. Nevertheless the fact remains and must not be overlooked that the Fourth Gospel furnishes superlative testimony to the spiritual greatness of the historic Jesus in that the Logos was given personification in him. No one would ever have thought of calling Hillel, or Augustus, or Marcus Aurelius God incarnate, and the fact that our author felt he could so describe Jesus proves the august proportions of his manhood. Thus the Fourth Gospel is of immense importance as evidence of the magnitude of Jesus' personality in that the author deemed him worthy to assume the rôle of Logos in the divine economy of the universe and to become God-incarnate. But the supreme service rendered by the author was his making the Gospel story attractive and appealing to people in the Greek-speaking world. For, by presenting Jesus, not as a member of a despised race, but as the Logos who had existed from the beginning of the world, exalted above all things Jewish, and furthermore by lifting the national Jewish conceptions of God, Mes-

siah, salvation and judgment out of their local and provincial setting and significance into truly universal forms, the author of the Fourth Gospel loosed the Christianity of the first century from the Jewish provincialism in which Paul had left it by his retention of the Messianic expectation and made it a universal religion, represented by Gentile no less than by Jewish converts.

If the personality of Jesus and the content of his teaching were to be life-giving to people outside of Palestine they must be reinterpreted in terms familiar to those accustomed to Greek modes of thought. If Christianity, which had been brought to the Gentile world by the missionary enterprise of the Apostle Paul and his associates, was to endure as a vital faith throughout this larger world, it must offer an intelligible account of the historic Jesus, its fountain-source. And to converts trained in Greek ways of thinking not all the facts could be understood. Paul in his preaching had familiarized the Gentiles with the idea of the pre-existence of Jesus and with a Christology not found in the Synoptic Gospels. The Christology of the Synoptists and that of the Apostle Paul had not as yet been harmonized. Two unamalgamated conceptions of the person of Jesus obtained at the beginning of the second century. The one presented him as the faithful Servant of God, glorified and exalted at His right hand, delivered by Him out of the power of death and Sheol in order that when His chosen people shall have repented of their wickedness in rejecting

His Son, the latter would return as the Christ, the Messiah, to restore the kingdom to Israel and reign forever in the transfigured Jerusalem. The other conception of Jesus' person identified him with the pre-existent Spirit, suggestive of the "redeemer-Gods" of the Greek religion, who descended to earth, battled for the good and true and then ascended to the Empyrean whence they came. The one conception was presented by the Synoptics, the other in the Pauline Epistles; the one Hebraic in origin and essence, the other generated in the atmosphere of Greek ideas. The two Christologies could not continue to stand thus in seeming opposition, or in unrelated juxtaposition. They must needs be harmonized, synthesized, if Christianity was to take permanent hold on the Gentile world. And to achieve this was the work the gifted Hellenist set himself. For, the Fourth Gospel tells the story of Jesus in such wise that Gentiles could see in it the two familiar doctrines of preëxistence and incarnation in which, as Pauline Christians they had been trained, but of which the Synoptic writers had no knowledge whatever.

Ever since the middle of the second century, when the Fourth Gospel was given to the world, it has been the favorite New Testament book of idealists, mystics, pietists. For centuries it has been called "the spiritual gospel" and rightly so, because it is rooted in a spiritual need as permanent as it is deep, the need of getting into vital touch with what is infinite and ultimate. In no other Gospel do we find

the synthesis of subordination to the Divine and a sense of perfect freedom in complete obedience to the highest as here, symbolized in the remark made by the Logos-Jesus in one and the same breath, "I without my Father can do nothing" and "I and my Father are one." And what is this but an expression of the awareness we have of our finiteness and imperfection, an awareness which sustains in us that humility and sense of dependence which are at the core of all genuine religion, call it by whatever name one will?

Using language that admits of a variety of interpretations the author has made the central parts of his gospel expressive of that mysticism which, like money, is a medium of exchange—spiritual coin acceptable among the most diverse types of mankind.

### (c) The Acts of the Apostles

Since the choice of books to be included in the New Testament was determined largely by their apostolic origin or by their relationship to apostles, it was natural that the book dealing with their activities, and especially those of Peter and Paul, should be admitted to the canon. And this book of "The Acts of the Apostles" constitutes our most important source of information on the earliest stage in the evolution of Christianity as an organized religion. A comparison of the first verse of the book with the preface to the third Gospel (Luke I, 1-4) suggests that both are from the same hand. As in his first volume the author states that he availed

himself of written records by predecessors, so here in his second volume he made use of an account of Paul's activities by one who had shared in many of them. Every reader of the book of Acts will recall long sections in which the pronoun "we" repeatedly occurs. The name of this companion of Paul is nowhere given, but the earliest tradition of the Church makes him Luke, a medical friend of the apostle. The many points of agreement between the third Gospel and the book of Acts—the linguistic and stylistic peculiarities, the treatment of Gentiles as equally worthy with Jews to receive the Gospel, the kindly attitude taken toward the Samaritans, all conspire to establish singleness of authorship for the two books. The presence of the "we" passages may seem to argue for dual authorship, but the author of these sections may well have been the author of the whole book because it begins with a personal address, "The former treatise have I written, O Theophilus," and a subsequent "we" would naturally include the "I" of the preface.

The narrative of the book of "Acts" begins where the Lucan ends. It forms the natural bridge connecting the story of Jesus with what we read in the apostolic letters and providing for them a fitting background.

Christianity dawned with the return of the chastened disciples from Galilee to Jerusalem to prepare for the expected reappearance of the risen and ascended Jesus and his inauguration of the Kingdom of heaven on earth. Of the day and the hour of

his coming knew no one, not even the angels. But that it would be very soon and for the generation to which Jesus himself belonged, all alike believed. Nothing indeed had been so persistently affirmed as this expectation. Again and again did the apostles appeal to men to repent and be converted so that their sins would be forgiven and blotted out when Messiah-Jesus would come with "the refreshing of his presence (III, 20). Scarcely a speech did they deliver without some allusion to his coming to usher in the new Kingdom. Their slogan was *Maranatha,* "the Lord come!" Accompanying the eleven from Galilee to Jerusalem were certain women, Mary, the mother of Jesus and his four brothers, Joses, James, Jude and Simon.* Unknown others joined this group so that the number was increased to one hundred and twenty (I, 15). We are accustomed to speak of them as "the first Christians," but if we are to speak accurately, we must call them the immediate predecessors of the first Christians, because they had not broken with Judaism, they were all of them Jews, devoted to the religion of Moses and the Prophets, even as Jesus had been. They differed from their fellow Jews only in that they believed Jesus was the Messiah and that he would soon return to fulfil the function of that office. All other Jews believed in the Messiah but denied he was Jesus. Not as yet had the name "Christian" come into existence. It was first used in the year 45 by Gentile residents of Antioch to describe, derisively, the fol-

* Acts I, 2-14 cf. MtXIII, 35.

lowers of the apostle Paul in that city (VI, 26) and it remained for him (as we shall see) to make the break with Judaism complete and institute a new religion. Arrived at Jerusalem the group of 120 assembled in "an upper room" of the city and there the first order of business was the election of a substitute for Judas, so that the original number of disciples might be restored. What a thoroughly democratic sort of election it was! There was no hierarchy, not even a hint of it. Peter simply acted as spokesman of the group, and proposed that all men present who had known Jesus from the day of his baptism to that of his death should be eligible for election (I, 22). To this all present agreeing, they proceeded with the election, the women treated on equal terms with the men. Nominations being in order, Joseph Justus and Matthias were named as candidates. Then followed prayer for Divine guidance in the choosing of one of these nominees. Lots were cast. Matthias was declared the choice of the assembly and the choice of God who was believed to have presided over the casting of the lots. (I, 13-26). The author of this narrative regarded this reorganization as the beginning of a new era and so believed it was ushered in on the morning of the day of Pentecost, the Jewish festival that commemorated the giving of the Law on Sinai and celebrated on the fiftieth day after the offering of the barley-sheaf in Passover week. (Ex. XXIII. cf. "Jubilees" VI.) Then it was, according to our author, that the twelve while "assembled for sup-

plication and prayer" were suddenly startled by "a sound from heaven as of the rushing of a mighty wind and there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire and it sat upon each of the twelve so that all were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages as the Spirit gave them utterance." (II, 1-4.) Listening foreigners hearing their own native languages spoken by the apostles interpreted it as evidence of intoxication (5-13). But Peter refuted the explanation reminding them that it was only nine o'clock in the morning and that consequently these apostles could not be drunken. (II, 14-15.) Far from it, they are but fulfilling a prophecy of Joel, spoken three centuries before, that the time was coming when God would "pour out his spirit" and men would utter predictions and see visions and God would show wonders in fire and vapor and save all who called upon his name. (Joel III.) (Acts II, 16-21.) Evidently the author of this narrative fancied that the apostles had power to speak foreign languages. But not even Paul, who needed it more than they, had such power. Yet he did have what he called "the gift of tongues" possessed also by others and regarded as a token of the presence and influence of the Holy Spirit. In the fourteenth chapter of his first letter to the Corinthians Paul refers to this gift of speaking in unknown tongues, intelligible only to God, a form of ecstatic speech, a sign that the spirit of Christ had made itself manifest in the speaker. A *"charisma"* or gift, it was,—like healing, preaching and prophesy-

ing,—to be used for edification through the aid of an interpreter. But the author of the book of *Acts* writing some fifty years after Paul's time misunderstood Paul's idea of this charisma and construed "speaking with tongues" to mean "talking foreign languages," whereas to Paul it meant one of the mysterious operations of God.

So impressed were the bystanders by this charismatic manifestation and by Peter's speech which followed it, that according to our author about three thousand persons were added to the one hundred and twenty of the original group of believers in the Messiahship and speedy return of Jesus (II, 11-41). Here we meet again with an evident tendency of the author to exaggerate and embellish the facts at his command. But this should not cause us to discredit his narrative as a whole. Scholarship today is toward rather than away from this book as a valued source on post-crucifixion history. Granted that his book is "saturated with the marvellous," this does not compel us to question the substantial accuracy of his narrative. Granted also that he shows a decided desire to "smooth down" the differences between Peter and Paul, to "make Peter unduly Pauline," it must be remembered that a more liberal spirit obtained in the church at Jerusalem in the early days before James became head of the church there and that the exceeding liberality of Paul may have occasioned the narrowness of Peter. In short, despite its exaggeration, inaccuracies and kindred limita-

tions, all easily detected, the book of Acts is an honest and authentic piece of historical literature.

The election of Matthias accomplished, the work of systematic preaching to the Jews begins. But the subject-matter of their preaching far from being, as we would expect, the gospel of Jesus with its stress on the morality of the spirit and the cultivating of character that qualified for entrance into the coming Kingdom, dealt with the death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus, and his expected return to earth as the Messiah, to inaugurate the new Kingdom. In other words the work of the apostles was *not* a continuation of the gospel of Jesus. Rather was it a reproduction of the work of John the Baptist. For, like him, the Apostles stressed the coming of Messiah as near at hand. Like him they adopted baptism as a symbol of purification and preparedness for entrance into the Kingdom. A baptism of repentance it was, like John's and preceded by a confession of sins, securing to the penitent forgiveness and escape from the doom of an impending Messianic judgment, "the wrath to come."

"Ye men of Israel," said Peter, "repent and be ye baptised every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, unto the remission of your sins. Save yourselves from this wicked generation" (II, 38-40). On to their belief in the Messiahship of Jesus and his speedy return as Messiah the apostles grafted their Jewish theology and ceremonialism. If orthodox Jews objected that Jesus could not be the Messiah they met the objection with the words: "This is the

stone which was set at naught by you builders and which is become the head of the corner" (IV, 11). If one doubted Jesus' return, his skepticism was met with a quotation from the vision of Daniel: "behold there came with the clouds of heaven one like unto a Son of Man (Dan. VII, 13).

At first the preaching of the apostles to their fellow Jews was not seriously interfered with. But after Peter's second speech, he and John, who was with him, were arrested and a few days after their release (which was quietly granted with a warning to desist from preaching and healing) the whole twelve were arrested for contempt of court, having failed to heed the court's order to stop their preaching. At the trial Peter pleaded "we ought to obey God rather than men," a remark construed as blasphemous and for which the penalty was death. But a distinguished doctor of the Law, Gamaliel, grandson of the illustrious Hillel, interceded, pleading for toleration and advising the court to "leave these men alone"; for, if what they stand for were false, it would die a natural death; if true, how humiliating to the Court it would be to be found fighting against the truth (V, 25-40). So the apostles were acquitted yet "ceased they not to preach Jesus the Messiah rejoicing they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name" (V, 41-42). And the number of converts continued to increase. Among them was one Stephen, a Greek Jew, a man of great skill in debate. Having dared to say to certain orthodox Jews that Jesus would soon come, destroy the temple

and change customs inherited from Moses (VI, 14), Stephen was arrested and brought before the Council on the charge of blasphemy. "And all that sat in the Council, fastening their eyes upon him saw his face as it had been the face of an angel" (VI, 15). At the close of his defense, Stephen, in a sublime outburst of indignation, said: "Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Spirit, as your fathers did so do ye" (VII, 51). And his fearless daring cost him his life. "They stoned Stephen. And he, kneeling, cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this he fell asleep" (VII, 59, 60).

And here it is that we are introduced to a young man named Saul (later called Paul) at whose feet the stoners of Stephen laid their garments while he looked on approvingly at the ghastly scene. (VII, 58; VII, 1.) Later, while devout men were burying Stephen and making great lamentation over him this Saul was enlisting as a participant in the general persecution that followed upon the death of Stephen, a persecution of all who, like Stephen, believed in the Messiahship of Jesus; a persecution that drove the apostles and hosts of lay believers out of Jerusalem to Samaria and beyond, as far as Damascus. "And Saul laid waste the church, entering into every house and haling men and women, committed them to prison . . . Breathing threatening and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, he went unto the high priest and asked of him letters to Damascus

unto the synagogues, that if he found any that were of the Way (believers in Jesus as Messiah) whether men or women, he might bring them, bound, to Jerusalem, for trial (VIII, 3; IX, 1-2). Just here let a word be said regarding the change of name from "Saul" to "Paul." In chapter thirteen at the ninth verse the author remarks parenthetically that Saul "is also called Paul." Many explanations have been offered of this change of name. The probability is that the name Paul was given Saul by Gentiles after his entrance upon missionary work among them. For, Paulus signifies "little" and he himself has told us he was small of stature. (II Cor. X, 10.) Moreover the change of name would be an index of changed sympathies, after entrance upon his apostolic mission.

Clearly then the apostles and their followers were not orthodox Jews because they believed Jesus was the Messiah and would soon return as such; they were not Christians for as yet a new religion distinguished from Judaism had not been developed. They were the "sect of the Nazarenes," as we find them named at the trial of Paul before Felix (XXIV, 5) a sect of Judaism composed of Jews who had cut themselves off from historic orthodox Judaism to the extent that while still holding to their inherited theology, they believed in the Messiahship of Jesus. They were the link connecting Judaism with Paul's work as leader of the way from "Nazareneism" to Christianity. Until he came no member of the sect of the Nazarenes, to which he had him-

self belonged, believed that devotion to the prescriptions of the Jewish Law could be dispensed with as a means of salvation if one believed in the saving power of Messiah-Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection. Every member believed that such requirements as the eating of "Kosher" meat and the rite of circumcision (the very badge of Judaism) must be scrupulously observed else salvation from "the wrath to come" would be impossible. It remained for Paul to make the break with Judaism complete and so effect the transition from Nazareneism to Christianity by showing (as we shall see in his letters) that allegiance to all such requirements of the Law could be surrendered when the saving power of the crucified, risen Jesus was acknowledged—his sacrifice an *all-sufficing* means of salvation and meaningless if obedience to the Law were still insisted upon.

Reverting to the narrative of the general persecution of the "sect of the Nazarenes" following the stoning of Stephen, the author tells us that the rabid persecutor Saul received the coveted commission to Damascus to ferret out the apostles and bring them back to Jerusalem for trial. But on the way thither the fierce inquisitor had an experience which completely transformed him from persecutor to champion of the cause he intended to destroy. Of this transforming experience we have three accounts in the book of Acts. The first, recorded in the ninth chapter, verses three to nineteen, forms part of the historical narrative which we have thus far traced;

the second and third occur in Paul's speeches before the populace of Jerusalem and before King Agrippa respectively. (XXII, 3-11; XXVI, 9-21.) The story of the vision is too well known to need repeating. Suffice it to note that the credibility of his experience is well attested by similar experiences related by authorities on psychology.* To explain the experience of Paul on the road to Damascus we must consult his letters to the Galatians and to the Corinthians. From these we interpret his conversion in terms of the following facts (a) his neurotic temperament, given as he was to trances, visions, revelations (Acts IX, 12; II Cor. XII, 1-4) (b) his recollection, en route to Damascus of the calm, serene, trustful expression on the face of the dying Stephen—causing Paul to ask himself, was there perhaps truth in what Stephen stood for and died for so bravely and tranquilly? (c) the long journey of 136 miles to Damascus gave Paul time for reflection on his own views and those of Stephen. Could it be, he may well have thought, that these "Nazarenes" were right, that the crucifixion of Jesus was in truth a propitiation for the sins of Israel? (d) Paul's use of the Greek proverb, "it is hard for thee to kick against the goad," referring to the former's practice of goading the ox with a pointed stick in the left hand as he held the plough with his right. And when the ox was rather severely pricked he "kicked against the goad." Applied to Paul's experience this

* See the cases adduced by Prof. Wm. James in his "Varieties of Religious Experience."

meant that it was very difficult for him to suppress (kick against) the haunting conviction (goad) that Stephen and his fellow Nazarenes were right in their views of Jesus; so difficult indeed was it for him to down this persistently invading belief, to "kick against the goad" that at last he abandoned the effort,—the ever-recurring conviction mastered him. Thus for this man of nervous temperament, of fervid impetuous nature, the long, hard struggle ended in the episode thrice recorded in the book of Acts.

Arriving at Damascus blinded by his experience on the way thither, Paul was soon restored to sight, endowed with "the spirit" and baptized. Thereupon he spent some days with the apostles stationed at Damascus, preached in the synagogues, proving that Jesus was the Messiah and when threatened with assassination escaped secretly to Jerusalem (IX, 18-26). But when we compare these statements with Paul's own description of what actually transpired, we see that in the book of Acts we have somewhat legendary statements. For it is clear from his own testimony that Paul stayed in the region of Damascus in a retired place that commended itself as offering opportunity for needed self-examination and self-collecting after the transforming experience through which he had just passed. How long he remained in retirement and what the nature of his thinking there was, we do not know because the record in Acts and Paul's own statements in his letter to the Galatians are hopelessly irreconcilable (cf. Acts IX, 14-31 with Gal. I, 16-18., II Cor. II, 32-

33). As for the remaining chapters of Acts they are devoted in the main to a series of vivid pictures in the stormy career of Paul, to which we shall return in our study of his Letters.

### (d) Epistolary Scriptures—The Letters of the Apostle Paul

Following the book of the Acts of the Apostles are twenty-one Epistles, fourteen of them ascribed to the apostle Paul and seven whose titles bear other apostolic names. Among all these letter-writers Paul is supreme, both in quantity and in quality. Of the fourteen letters supposed to be his, that *to the Romans* stands first, perhaps because the chief of all the churches he founded was that at Rome; perhaps, and more likely, because this is the longest of all the letters and the order of arrangement in the canon seems to have been determined by their length. With the exception of *II Corinthians* (which naturally follows I Cor.) and the *Epistle to the Hebrews,* (which comes after the brief note to *Philemon,* though almost as long as II Corinthians) these fourteen letters are arranged according to their length. The position of the *Epistle to the Hebrews,* at the end of the Pauline group, points to the age-long difficulty in determining its authorship. Whether or not Paul wrote all of these letters which the Latin Bible of the middle ages attributed to him, they all sprang out of active missionary enterprise and were written during the decade from 52 to 62.

This collection of letters constituted the first Chris-

tian canon of scriptures; the Gospels, as we know them, having not as yet been written. From the time of the early Christian Fathers down to our own day the literature of New Testament criticism has been largely concerned with the disputed genuineness of the letters attributed to the apostle Paul. True, all but the epistle to the *Hebrews* have his signature, or personal attestation, and the apostle himself set this down as a test of genuineness. Thus, for example, at the close of the second letter to the *Thessalonians,* we read: "the salutation of me, Paul, with mine own hand, *which is the token in every epistle:* so I write" (III, 17).* Yet notwithstanding this testimony, considerable doubt has been cast upon five others besides the *Epistle to the Hebrews,* viz. the so-called "pastoral" epistles (I and II Timothy and Titus) together with *II Thessalonians* itself and the letter to the *Ephesians.* And though the remaining eight—to name them in the probable order of their production,—*I Thessalonians, Galatians, I and II Corinthians, Colossians, Philemon, Philippians* and *Romans,* are regarded by a goodly number of competent critics as genuine letters of Paul, yet are there other scholars who, following in the wake of the famous founder of the Tübingen school, F. C. Baur (and their competence to pass judgment on the question is freely conceded) hold that only four of the fourteen can be accepted as Paul's. A still smaller group of critics, including the distinguished Dutch scholar, Professor Van Manen of Leyden Uni-

* The italics are mine.

versity, are of the opinion that none of the letters ascribed to Paul are from his pen—a view that is still, after forty years of discussion, as egregious as when, in 1888, it was first propounded. The inexorable count of pages will not permit our entering upon an evaluation of these conflicting opinions of acknowledged scholars. It must suffice to fix attention exclusively on the four letters about the genuineness of which there is a minimum of doubt. *Galatians, I and II Corinthians, Romans.*

When we pass from the book of Acts to these Letters we turn from narrative to autobiography. With singular frankness and candor they reveal the many-sided character of Paul, his various moods, his humility and his pride, his breadth and his narrowness, his strength and his limitations. In the words of Principal Fairbairn of Edinburgh University, "Paul, as he lives before us in his Epistles is a man who holds many men within him—so many indeed that we may describe him as the most unintelligible of men to the critic who has never been moved by enthusiasm for humanity; but the most intelligible of men to the man who has heard within himself the sound of all the voices that speak in men."

A question of paramount importance as to the reading of these letters is, with which of the four should our reading begin? For, if a false start be made, not one of them will be read to the end. As aversion to the poetry of Browning has frequently been generated by a false start, (by beginning *e.g.*, with *Sordello,* or *Fifine,* or *Prince Hohenstiel*), so

distaste for Paul's Letters is often the consequence of a start made with the letter to the *Romans*. No, the true starting point for a satisfying study of the Apostle through his Letters is the second letter to the *Corinthians* because it is the most autobiographic of all, crammed with information about his outward life and at the same time revealing his inmost soul, as when he says: "such confidence have we through Christ to God-ward: not that we are sufficient unto ourselves to account anything as from ourselves; but our sufficing is from God who also made us sufficient as ministers of a new covenant, not of the letter, but of the spirit. For the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life (III, 4-6).

From this second letter to the *Corinthians* we pass to that written to the group of churches in Asia Minor, *Galatia,* one of which was probably at Angora, the new Turkish capital. Next would come the first letter to the converts at Corinth, the great metropolis of first century Greece, a wealthy and licentious city, the ruins of which are to be seen back of the new Corinth; the letter in which he answers the knotty question put to him by skeptical members touching his central doctrine of the resurrection (XV). Finally would be read the letter to the *Romans* which gives us an almost systematic exposition of Paul's theology.

*Galatians* was written in Corinth, probably in the year 53. It was written at white heat under extreme pressure in response to the bad news, brought to Paul, of the seduction of converts from the fold by

Judaizing agitators, *i.e.,* Nazarenes who insisted on recognition of the Mosaic Law *side by side with and of equal importance with* acceptance of salvation through the death of Jesus Christ. They stirred up in the minds of the Christian Galatians such questions as these: Has the Law eternal validity or has it not? Must a Gentile believer in salvation through Christ be circumcised? Must he retain the distinction between clean and unclean food? Must he abstain from meat offered to idols (II, 16; III, 3). To all of which Paul answered that Levitical sacrifices and Mosaic ordinances were superfluous as means of salvation from "the wrath to come" now that the supreme and all-sufficing sacrifice had been made. What further need of the Law now that this Divine Grace had been vouchsafed to men, whereby they are saved by faith, *i.e.,* by "putting on the Lord Jesus Christ"; *i.e.,* becoming assimilated to him, as it were, wrapping themselves about with him (II, 20-21). To clinch his argument and clarify his exposition of the new covenant Paul used the familiar illustration of a Jewish boy and his tutor. Well enough during his tender years for a boy to have a companion-tutor, but once old enough to go to school alone, let him be turned over to the Master and dispense with the pedagogue. Similarly was it well enough for the Jews, in the childhood-period of their development to have had the Law,—a pedagogue or tutor,—but now that they have entered on the manhood-stage let the Law lead them to the Master, Christ, as did the tutor the boy to the Master of the school. "The

Law was our pedagogue bringing us to Christ" (III, 24). And when Paul "withstood Peter to the face" at Antioch saying, "if thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, why compellest thou Gentiles to live after the manner of Jews," what he meant was that if the Jewish ways are not necessary to salvation Peter acted the part of a hypocrite; if they are necessary "then has Christ died in vain." (II, 4-6-9, 14, 21.) But this idea was new to Peter who had never thought out the logic of his belief in Jesus and who could not entertain the idea that God had opened a new door to salvation that made the old door of obedience to Mosaic Laws unnecessary. Paul, as a trained thinker, saw that the crucifixion becomes meaningless if obedience to the Law be still insisted upon as a requisite for salvation.

Thus the letter to the *Galatians* takes rank as one of the most important documents preserved from the first century, and it has moreover permanent value as a protest against formalism and as a declaration of religious independence, as a statement of the sufficing of "the law of the spirit of life."

In his letter to the *Romans* Paul had occasion to revive the issue, but here he is more conciliatory in his attitude to the Law, putting adherence to its ceremonial requirements in the category of *adiaphora,*—things indifferent,—whereas in *Galatians* he put this adherence on a level with heathen-worship and calls it "a curse" as opposed to the spirit of Christ. And the reason for this difference of

attitude is that the legalistic party in the church at Rome were not oppressors but the oppressed.

This letter to the church in Rome was written from Corinth, about the year 59, when Paul was about to leave Greece with a charity fund for the poor of the churches at Jerusalem, after which he hoped to visit Rome, and Spain. He writes: "Many times was I hindered from coming to you, many years have I had a longing to come to you, whensoever I go to Spain (for I hope to see you in my journey)—but now I go to Jerusalem to minister to the Saints when therefore I have accomplished this I will go on, by you, to Spain" (XV, 25-28).

The church in Rome had been founded by Paul and no anti-Pauline agitators disturbed its peace as in Galatia. Both Jews and Gentiles were members of the church and from the start there had been friction. The Jewish-Christians clung to their inherited traditions, the Gentile-Christians had shown an arrogant, haughty, over-bearing spirit and manner toward these Jewish fellow members. There was grave danger that the unity of the church would be disrupted. So in this letter Paul sought to kindle in the hearts of the Gentile group humility and a forbearing love and to waken the Jewish contingent to a deeper realization of what his essential message involves. He puts it forth as a *fulfilment* of Old Testament teaching and deals with the old question of allegiance to Jewish ceremonialism in a much milder and more conciliatory fashion than in his letter to the *Galatians.*

Thus the twofold purpose of the letter to the *Romans* was to produce harmony and orderly church-life calling for a deeper comprehension of the new gospel which frees the Jewish members from the Law and for the practice toward them of a humble and forbearing love by the Gentiles. "We know that whatsoever things the Law saith, it speaketh to them that are under the Law; that every mouth may be stopped and all the world be brought under the judgment of God. . . . But now, apart from the Law, a righteousness of God hath been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ unto all them that believe, for there is no distinction; for all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ." (III, 19-24.) Further on in the Letter we read: "In love of the brethren be tenderly affectioned, let love be without hypocrisy. Set not your mind on high things but condescend to things that are lowly. Be not wise in your own conceits. Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts of the flesh." (XII, 9; XIII, 14.)

Note with what unusual care and forethought this letter was written. Unlike his other letters which were spontaneous, emotional, unstudied outpourings, staying not for the niceties of rhetorical and grammatical accuracy, hesitating not to consider what it were wise to write and what to withhold, because motivated by strong and deep feeling, this letter to

the Romans is in large part carefully thought out, almost to the point of systematic structural composition, witness the sections into which the letter so readily divides—chap. I-VIII, IX-XI, XII-XV,—the whole giving us an orderly exposition of Paul's theology, such as is not found elsewhere in his writings. Paul was a Christian for the last thirty years of his life and during all that time he was a strenuous, valiant worker for the extension of the faith of which he had once made havoc. We must beware of thinking of him primarily as a letter-writer. For, what, after all, are fourteen or even ten times fourteen letters out of a missionary ministry of thirty years? Paul was, above all else, a worker, "a mighty man of action," and his letters were merely by-products of his activity, interim checks to deal provisionally with a situation till he could come to handle it in person. How unique they are, and how, to this day, they throb with the passion of his soul, conveying to us, as though we were his contemporaries, the supreme triumph of his faith! No wonder that after his death these letters constituted the beginning of a canon of New Testament scriptures.

(e) Epistolary Scriptures—Letters of other Apostles

As a consequence of the circulation of Paul's letters, the letter-form became a favorite way of addressing the churches. And letters closely resembling Paul's in phraseology and style were the most effective. Many of these, notably the three "Pastoral" letters were written in his name that he might con-

tinue to address the church whose foundation he had so firmly laid. Nor has this continuance and extension of Paul's work anything discreditable about it. Rather was it a recognized literary procedure of the time. It bespoke the writer's self-effacement and his devotion to the great exemplar whose message he wished to perpetuate and reinforce for his own generation. Internal evidence shows that all these "Pauline" letters were written in the century following Paul's death. Some of them survive only as mere names, others in fragmentary form and a third group as *apocrypha.* Still another result of the circulation of Paul's letters was the production of similar letters bearing the names of other departed and revered apostles. And the New Testament canon includes seven such letters known as the "catholic" epistles, *i.e.,*—general letters for circulation, not in some particular locality, but in Christendom anywhere. All seven bear apostolic names, James, Jude, (*i.e.,* Judas) Peter and John.

The so-called Pastoral letters owe this name to the fact that all three are manuals of pastoral counsel for young church leaders. They were written in the time of Hadrian (about 110) and they assume, as a literary form, the guise of communications of Paul to two of his most faithful helpers, Timothy and Titus. Their common characteristics of style, vocabulary and religious interest point to one writer for all three, a devoted Paulinist, who modestly suppressed his own personality in that of his Teacher and used terms and phrases from Paul's own letters

to give color and strength to his own deliverances,—a practice not considered unethical in an age when literary ownership, as we understand it, did not exist. The object of the three Pastoral letters was to regulate church life, to uphold the form of "sound words" and "sound doctrine" (phrases never used by Paul) and to strengthen the bond of Christian fellowship.

"Give diligence to present thyself approved unto God, handling aright the word of truth. Abide in the things thou hast learned, knowing of whom thou hast learned them, the sacred writings that are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus" (II Tim. II, 15; III, 14-15). "Speak thou the things that befit sound doctrine. Shun foolish questionings and fightings about the Law, for they are unprofitable and vain. A man that is heretical, after a first and second admonition, refuse; knowing that such an one is perverted and sinneth, being self-condemned." (Titus II, 1; III, 9-11.)

Turning to the "catholic" Epistles, addressed to the Christian fellowship as a whole, they point to a time when men were growing conscious of "the Church" as expressed in the noble terms of the letter to the *Ephesians,* "a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing" (V, 27). Hence the desire to produce letters intended for Christians everywhere, rather than for a particular Church or locality.

The author of the *Epistle of James* calls himself

"a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ" (I, 1). Tradition has identified him with the brother of Jesus, head of the church in Jerusalem; but the epistle itself gives no warrant for the identification. James (Jacob) was a very common name among the Jews. The central characteristic of this letter is its polemic against the Pauline doctrine of justification by faith in the interests of morality which had grown "loose." But it is clear that he did not fully grasp the import of Paul's conception of faith—"the putting on of the Lord Jesus Christ." The letter was addressed to "the twelve tribes in the dispersion" (I, 11) and the writer meant thereby the church which is the new Israel and his "perfect law of liberty" included the moral precepts of Moses as well as the golden rule of Jesus. To reform the moral life of his time was his chief concern, nowhere better exemplified than in the noble plea, "Be ye doers of the Word and not hearers only, deluding your own selves. For if anyone be a hearer only and not a doer he is like a man beholding himself in a mirror, for he beholdeth himself and goeth away and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. . . . Pure religion is this: to visit the fatherless and the widows in their affliction and to keep himself unspotted from the world." (I, 22, 23, 27.)

The author of the general *Epistle of Jude* announces himself as "Judas, a servant of Jesus Christ and brother of James" (I, 1). By James is doubtless meant the brother of Jesus and the notion that Jesus could not have had any real brothers explains the

writer's cautious designation of himself as "brother of James." He is far removed from the apostolic age, reminding his readers of "words spoken aforetime by the Apostles of Jesus Christ (I, 17) as he warns them against false teachers with loose morals, presumably referring to a certain school of Gnostics and indicating that his letter could not have been written much earlier than the middle of the second century.

*The first epistle general of Peter* is, of course, not the work of the fisherman-disciple of Jesus, as internal evidence plainly proves, although this is the earliest of the group of "catholic" epistles. The writer's purpose was to exhort the Christians scattered throughout Galatia, Cappadocia, Bithynia and Pontus to be patient and hopeful in suffering persecution because they bear the Christian name—the reference being to the persecution under Trajan which was waged in these very districts and made known to us in the letters of Pliny the Younger. Hence the author cannot have been the disciple of Jesus, but a writer living some time after 110, a conclusion reinforced by the dependence of the author on some of Paul's Letters, the *Epistle to the Hebrews,* and the Book of Revelation, (I, 10-12, 19, 21) and by his note on the rite of baptism as a church ordinance (III, 20-21).

*The second Epistle general of Peter* is probably the latest of the New Testament books. It sought to encourage the despondent churches as to the return of Jesus from heaven and to account for the delay

of his advent. The writer refers to the "mockers coming with mockery and saying where is the promise of his coming, for since the fathers fell asleep all things have remained as from the beginning of the creation" (III, 4). And he explained "the Lord's delay," in these words: "Forget not, dearly beloved, that the Lord is not slack concerning his promise, not wishing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. For one day is with the Lord as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day" (III, 8-9).

Just as these four catholic, or general epistles were given apostolic names in order to enlarge the stream of edifying writings which circulated among the churches and are letters only in form, chosen because of the precedent for it in Paul's example, so the remaining three, (I, II, III John) were originally anonymous communications and for the selfsame reason given the apostolic name *John*. And, like the preceding four, they belong to the generation after Paul and bear witness to the first period of native missionary work after his death. The purport of the writer of the first of the three Johannine Epistles was to warn against heresies and to defend the historicity of Jesus. "That which we have heard, that which we have seen with our eyes and our hands handled concerning the Word (and the Word was manifest and we have seen and bear witness and declare unto you the life which was with the Father even manifested unto us) that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you also that

ye may have fellowship with us (I, 1-3) "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but prove the spirits, whether they are of God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the spirit of God—every spirit which confesseth that Jesus Christ was come in the flesh is of God and every spirit which confesseth not Jesus is not of God. And this is the spirit of anti-Christ, whereof ye have heard that it cometh and now it is in the world already" (IV, 1-3).

*The second general epistle,* consisting of but thirteen verses, has for its burden the self-same admonition and defense. "Many deceivers have gone forth into the world, even they that confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is the deceiver and anti-Christ. Look to yourselves that ye destroy not the things we have wrought." (7-8.) "If any one cometh to you and bringeth not this teaching, receive him not into your house and give him no greeting, for he that giveth him greeting partaketh of his evil works." (10-11.)

*The third general epistle of John* records the rejoicing in the writer's heart on hearing that the churches have resisted the wiles of Anti-christ and held firmly to their belief in the historicity of Jesus and his power unto salvation. "I rejoiced greatly," he writes, "when brethren came and bare witness to your truth even as ye walk in truth. Greater joy have I none than to hear of my children walking in the truth" (3-4).

"Catholic" or general epistles began to appear

during the last years of the first century and they continued to appear throughout the first half of the second century. And by the year 150 everything now in the New Testament had been written and was in process of circulation among the churches.

We have thus far considered three of the four types of literature contained in the canon; viz., gospel-biography, apostolic history and letters. It remains to review the fourth type,—apocalyptic, "The Revelation of St. John the Divine."

### (f) The Book of Revelation

Though among the earliest books to be included in the growing canon of the New Testament, no other is so difficult to understand as the Book of Revelation. And the principal reason is that its form and contents are far removed from modern habits of thought and expression. The readers for whom the book was written lived in an altogether different intellectual world from ours. They understood and delighted in the type of prophetic vision characteristic of the book. They were quick to see the purpose of its author and the meaning of his imagery and symbolism. But for us of another age and training, a special course of study and in a field seldom entered is required. Nor is our confessed distaste for its strange thought and grotesque expression without precedent. As early as the second century Origen openly avowed his dislike for the book and later Fathers of the Church were for excluding it from the New Testament canon. Even to

this day the Syrian branch of the Christian Church has its New Testament without the Book of Revelation. Nay more, throughout the centuries following Origen's untempered pronouncement of his distaste for it, many an echo of his sentiments was heard, particularly from Luther, Zwingli and Calvin, as the difficulties of interpretation and understanding increased.

The Book of Revelation is an apocalypse. The word derives from the Greek ἀποκαλύπτειν, meaning, to take the cover off, to reveal. As an apocalypse this book takes its place in a long line of kindred books, reaching back to the Book of Daniel, (the supreme apocalypse of the Old Testament) and including that library of apocalypses, the books of *Enoch,* as well as the *Assumption of Moses* and the *Apocalypses of Baruch* and *Ezra* (II Esdras). All these Jewish books of revelation are prototypes of the Christian book and many of its strange symbols and figures of speech derive directly from the earlier apocalypses. They all alike represent the form which Hebrew prophecy took in the two centuries immediately preceding the Christian era and all the Christian apocalypses of the first two centuries of our era are imitations of these predecessors. We read in the Book of Revelation of locusts, the dragon, the scarlet woman, the sea of glass, the gates of pearl, the walls of sapphire and other precious stones, the river of life; but in no instance is the reference original with the writer. On the contrary, all these symbols and images were used by earlier apocalyp-

tists and may be found for the most part in the Jewish "Pseudepigrapha" produced in the first century before and after the beginning of the Christian era. Moreover, in using this traditional apocalyptic material, the author of the Book of Revelation sought to show that, under Christian conditions and principles of living, the Hebrew symbolism and imagery still held good. And the prime concern of the writers of all these apocalyptic prophecies, Christian as well as Jewish, was, not to be correct in their prevision of the details of coming events, but to see and reveal the great forces of good and evil at work in the world and to show that however unpromising prevailing conditions might be, the ultimate triumph of God's purposes is certain.

All apocalyptic literature, from Daniel to the Book of Revelation, sprang from persecution or oppression. In times of prosperity and peace no apocalypse ever appeared. And the object of all such literature was to comfort the persecuted and the oppressed by putting them in possession of a hopeful optimism, surcharged with and based on the author's theism. We see this most clearly exemplified by the Book of Revelation. The author was long supposed to be the writer of the Fourth Gospel. Yet what could be more diverse than these two books? They belong to two fundamentally different modes of thought. All attempts to identify the author of the Apocalypse have failed. We do not know who this John was. All we know is that he corresponds to no one in the New Testament of that name, but was

a brother of the persecuted Asian Christians, a sharer of their tribulations and in the patience that had to be borne until God's promises would be fulfilled.

No other New Testament book can be so exactly dated as this. Internal evidence agrees with external, as given by Irenaeus, in placing the book "near the close of Domitian's reign," *i.e.,* the year 95. It opens with seven messages, one addressed to each of seven of the churches in Asia Minor:—Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, Laodicea (I, 4; III, 22). The author was familiar with the churches in each of these seven cities and in his message strikes the keynote of its spiritual condition. The membership of these churches was made up of Gentile (not Jewish) folk, yet people who, prior to their conversion to Christianity had been deeply influenced by Jewish institutions—the Synagogue and its services and the literature of Judaism, especially the Old Testament. Yet their personal contacts were mainly with fellow Gentiles. They felt themselves harassed on the one hand by Jews, Paul's enemies, who resented the proselytism that had Christianized a large portion of the population (VII, 10-11) and on the other by representatives of various speculative cults whose morals were not above reproach, but whose intellectual interest in mythologies and religious philosophies was keen and active. Then too the secular world, with its manifold means for gratification of the senses, brought its temptations to the converts. Add to all this the insistence of the Roman Government on worship of

the Emperor as the solemn duty of all loyal citizens —a worship that had taken a strong hold on the inhabitants of Asia Minor and which, if ignored, inevitably brought punishment to the offenders. Now this type of idolatry was most abhorrent to the Christian mind. The author of our book stigmatized it as a devilish institution, the last manifestation of the powers of evil in the world, their final effort to win out against the Power of God (XIII, 4-9; XIV sq). Seeing his fellow Christians beset by hostile Jews, by allurements to lead an immoral life and by the prospect of increasing Roman persecution for their traitorous abstinence from worship of the Emperor, the writer addresses himself to the practical purpose of bringing them comfort. Warning them against worldliness and against discouragement and inciting them to deeper confidence in God's power and final victory over the evil forces that will shortly gather for the last annihilating blow. Temptation to immoral living and to compliance with Roman demand for idolatry in its most objectionable form—this was the test to which the seven churches were being put. And the letter (for the author has cast his visions and prophecies in the form of a letter) addressed to them is intended to steel their hearts, fire their imagination and fit them to survive the dread test. Through the murky clouds of persecution that were thickening about the infant Asian church the author saw with crystal clearness the sure triumph of God's will over an unclean world. For the first readers of his book,

who would soon have to choose between worship of the Beast (Nero) and allegiance to the bleeding Lamb that was slain, it was an ineffable boon to be shown the supernal vision of those who had come through the great tribulation (VII, 14) and whom One who also had suffered guided to fountains of living water and from whose eyes God would wipe away all tears (VI, 9-10; XXI, 4).

Without pausing to review the many attempts that have been made to understand and appreciate the book, let us come at once to two fundamental prerequisites, (a) recognition of the plain purpose of the author to offer prophecy not history and (b) knowledge of what prophecy meant for him. Unlike the Book of Daniel, this book professes to be written by a contemporary of what is put forth. He tells us he has been expressly enjoined "to seal not up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is at hand . . . the Lord hath sent his angel to show unto his servants the things which must shortly come to pass." In other words, it will not do (if the secret of this book is to be disclosed) to follow in the wake of those early interpreters who tried to see in it the procession of modern historical events, perceived by supernatural knowledge, or of those later students who saw in the book a succession of symbolic pictures of the author's own time, *based* on observation and hearsay. No, as Prof. J. H. Ropes has intimated (see his illuminating article in the *Harvard Theological Review,* 1925) we must take note of the significance he attached to prophecy. For

him prophecy is no mere exposition of history in advance of its occurrence; rather is it a revelation of the working out of the great purposes of God for mankind. And what the author offers in his book is a presentation of one way in which that purpose might work out; a presentation figurative, fanciful, symbolical, not without parts that are vague in the extreme—consequently the reader comes closest to the author's meaning and intent when he frees himself from all constraint to transform the prophetic pictures into agreement with what he fancied were the facts intended; when he "lets the book teach us what *it* will, not what we will." Every effort to visualize the prophetic visions fails; but that only testifies to the author's success. For he aimed at giving the reader a sense of the marvellous realities beyond man's power to grasp. And the very quintessence of apocalyptic literature was here in the fulfilment of this intention, *i.e.,* the rousing in the reader's mind of the sense of an overwhelming glory and an ineffable blessedness. Take for example the following verses from the twenty-first and twenty-second chapters of his book. "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and first earth are passed away and the sea is no more. And I saw the holy city of Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband and I heard a great voice out of the throne saying, behold the tabernacle of God is with men and he shall dwell with them and they shall be his people and God himself shall be

with them and be their God and he shall wipe away every tear from their eyes and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain any more. (XXI, 1-4.) "And there shall be no more anything accursed, the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be therein and his servants shall do him service and they shall see his face, and his name shall be on their foreheads and there shall be night no more, the Lord God shall give them light and they shall reign forever and ever." (XXII, 3-5.)

Clearly the denotation or tangible meaning of the words is as nothing compared to their *connotation,* or what is suggested as we hear the words. All such visions are the product of emotion more than of intellect; of deep stirrings in the soul of the writer yet as real and indefinable as the soul itself. And the essential value of the visions lies not in their "supernaturalness attested by their inexplicability" but in the moral and religious ideas they enshrine. These gave the book its place in the Bible and more especially the idea of the eternal hostility of right and wrong, the oneness of the cause of God and righteousness and the certain ultimate triumph of that Cause. These are the supreme and permanent truths of apocalyptic thought and no religious institution can be influential and helpful save as it lays firm and strong hold on them.

Finally it should be noted that the Apocalypse was the most important agency for keeping alive, in the early church, Jesus' perfervid expectation of the com-

ing kingdom of heaven, the new order of society. That dream of a milennium guaranteed "the great hope" against possible sinking into oblivion, sustained a divine discontent with things as they are and an eager longing for a new Jerusalem, a holy city whose residents would all be righteous and whose daily life would be filled with peace and joy. Thus was the book of Revelation a document composed for its own time, for the last decade of the first century when the Christians of Asia Minor, in and about Ephesus, sore beset by persecution were in dire need of a message of courage and cheer that would speak to them with indubitable authority and spiritual power. Such was this Apocalypse for them. And the very splendor of its diction, the glow of its imagery, the very intensity of its moral passion, and the very sublimity of its conviction of certain triumph,—all unite to secure for the Revelation immortality.

# WORLD UNITY

*A Monthly Magazine*
*interpreting the spirit of the new age*

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